1: Bowen-Jones et al. EZ6 Malta EZ6

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[For additional historical data, see category 116, pp. 109-146.]

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
EZ6 Malta EZ6

C. Constitutional and Social

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During World War I the political situation in the Islands remained amazingly stable. The re-imposition of bureaucratic rule by the Governor removed at least some of the opportunities for dispute. The departure from the political scene of Mizzi and Strickland also removed some of the personal animus that had appeared in the political conflict. During the war, the Maltese manpower contribution in labour battalions and on ship was considerable, and the security of the naval base was never questioned. After the cessation of hostilities there followed economic dislocation and in 1918 15,000 Dockyard workers were discharged, only 5,000 of whom had been re-engaged by 1920. Partly as an ameliorative measure accompanying others more directly valuable, and partly as a liberalist appreciation of services rendered, a new constitution was established in 1921 and further liberalised in 1928.

The 1921 constitution provided for bicameral representative and responsible government. The Governor in Council retained limited but reserve powers although no very clear separation was made between domestic and imperial affairs. For some years relative stability was maintained and political parties, major and minor, began to crystallise. Unfortunately for Malta the issues that had already developed (see Chapter V B) survived and, with the resurgence of nationalism in Italy and the logical extension of the process of anglicisation, all the old suspicions and enmities reappeared. The party which was to become termed 'Nationalist' became the protagonist of the still dominant upper middle-class and professional group and of those who saw the position of the Church threatened by the waning of Italian cultural supremacy. In 1920 a permanent Board of Education was created and in 1924 the Compulsory Attendance Act ensured a certain minimum of attendance once a pupil was registered. Although the Church schools remained independent, the growing dominance of English and to a lesser extent Maltese, and of secular education finally sparked off that antagonism to change which existed. In 1927 Lord Strickland returned to lead a party committed to hasten such change. Once again conflict of interests became acute and after a temporary suspension of the constitution in 1930, it was finally revoked, legally in 1936, in fact with effect from 1933 when Italian finally lost its position as one of the official languages (1). To an outsider, now as then, the period appears tragic in that it is characterised by pre-occupation with affairs of little relevance to the needs of most Maltese. The social and cultural dichotomy within the Islands was maintained.

An attempt to restart constitutional development was made in 1939 by the creation of a representative council but World War II forced a return to centralised government particularly during the state of siege. After hostilities had ceased a fresh approach to the problem was made, much in the spirit of 1920, and in 1947 the Constitution which was in force until 1958 was promulgated. It provided for single chamber Legislative Assembly of 40 members. Party government through an Executive Council advised the Governor. He, as head of the Imperial Government, alone had executive and legislative power in those reserved 'matters touching the public safety or defence', advised by a Nominated Council. In practice, this 'dyarchical' system depended on a logically impossible understanding and appreciation of the division of interests between reserved and non-reserved, imperial and domestic, affairs. Nevertheless, and as realised by the subscribers to the Report on the Round Table Conference in 1955 (2), some reservation of power to the Imperial Government is inevitably necessary.

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Since 1947, the cumulative effects of economic change have transformed the local political scene. There are now over 150,000 enfranchised voters and political power has slipped out of the hands of the upper middle-class. The most succinct statement of the platforms of the various modern political parties as they were before 1958 and probably still are in essence may be found in the Round Table Conference Report (3). To us, the most important feature of the contemporary political scene is the way in which the modern political cleavage

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
EZ6 Malta EZ6

As has already appeared it is impossible to live and work in Malta without becoming very much aware of the strength of the Church. We venture therefore to make some necessary comment on this at once most delicate and yet most vigorous aspect of Maltese affairs. 175 79

As noted in Chapter IV, religious activity of a highly developed and institutionalised nature was a feature of Malta even in prehistory. Little direct evidence is available of this facet of life in the semitic or classical cultures, and even when we come to the Christian era and St. Paul's shipwreck 'on an island called Melita' we have no conclusive evidence that this in fact was Malta, or that St. Paul introduced Christianity to the Islands (18).

At all events the Christian Church entered the Islands in Roman times, and the line of bishops regarded as beginning with Publius, St. Paul's host, although broken during the period of Arab rule, was re-established by the Normans. As examined in Chapter IV, from this time onward Malta became first a simple fief in Christendom and then its bastion, held by a Religious Order. Whatever toleration there may once have been between Christian and Moslem before 1530 was quickly erased.

The report by the Apostolic Visitor, Mgr. Pietro Duzina (19) of his visit to Malta in 1575 throws some light on the condition of the Church at the time. In answer to unorthodoxy a Holy Tribunal of the Inquisition was established, creating three rival forces in the Islands, the Grand Master, the Inquisitor and the Bishop. From Duzina's report and subsequent accounts we see that not until the Turkish threat in 1565 had been repulsed and the Visitor's instructions for future conduct had had some effect, did village life become centred around new and magnificent churches which replaced the smaller more humble edifices in the hamlets. Curia and architectural evidence (20) corroborate each other. From this time onward, the parishes, growing in number, became the administrative and social regional units that counted in Maltese life and the Parish Church became the focus of the religious, social, and economic life of the casals and villages. As patrons of all the arts, repositories of wealth, directors not only of consciences but all conscious action, the Parish organisations became, and to an amazing extent still retain, a permeating power. Quite apart from the regular clergy the Religious Orders have played an important part in the Maltese Church and in education and other aspects of social activity. The relationship between the Church and the Order of St. John was not always completely amicable. In the traditional village scene the village priest, in the virtual absence of an indigenous squirearchy, was the teacher, doctor, legal advisor as well as spiritual mentor. Compared with this the Knights were alien and apart from Maltese life. The position of the Church and the Order vis-a-vis the Papacy was also not completely easy. Nevertheless, mainly as a result of mutual non-interference, the Church gained complete local ascendancy.

During the nineteenth century an uneasy *modus vivendi* was established between the Church and the new non-Catholic rulers, and during most of the conflict over language and culture the Church played a pacific and calming role, concerning itself mainly with the administrative details necessitated by the rapidly increasing and nucleating population. How far the dependence of the individual on the spirit and dogma of his belief, the faith described in 1840 by Miège (21) as '*cette piété poussé jusqu'au fanatisme*', has been supported by the long years of insecurity during which Divine and ecclesiastical protection was felt as a real and precious thing, it is hard to say. One may speculate on the fact that it was at the old 'frontier' casal at Mosta, westernmost of the old settlements, that local piety built in days of security the vast church with a dome that ranks among the largest of the world. It is also true that the Maltese Church enforces more strict rules of conduct upon its people than other Churches now find possible.

However we may interpret the situation, the Church which succeeded in adjusting itself to nineteenth century changes has been faced in the twentieth with the consequences of those changes. The traditional society in which it was virtually omnipotent and omnipresent is changing into a new society in which the individual does not have to lean so much on the priest. Now, the younger genera- 178 79

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
EZ6 Malta EZ6

palms and pomegranates alongside potatoes - but in no case are conditions optimal or yields very good. In the comparatively closed economies of the past this mattered little; in an era of world trade and world markets Malta has now been left behind. Large-scale cotton production has virtually ceased and that of citrus fruit is declining; viticulture is of low standard and the olive tree very rare. Cereals can now provide only a tiny fraction of local needs while fodder production is limited in season and type by water shortage.

The critical phase in the social and economic reactions to the physical situation has also been reached. In the simple peasant communities of the past, the creative manual effort was necessarily associated with a low valuation of individual human effort and an arduous and restricted life. Now, however, economic and social opportunities and desires have widened and with them has come impatience with the demands imposed by the artificial landscape.

Higher per capita productivity to assure more freedom and leisure is only quickly attainable by technical and mechanical innovation. It is just such innovation that is impossible on a large scale on the land of Malta.

The slope analysis map (Fig. 28) illustrates one aspect of the problem. Maltese soil 12 inches deep needs, as a minimum amount, terracing at horizontal intervals of about 20 feet. Anything wider in the way of fields or a deeper soil makes essential increasingly higher and stronger retaining walls. The problem is such that considerable control is exercised by dip as well as gradient. The amount of labour involved in maintenance is heartbreaking by modern standards and yet, without it, erosion is quickly followed by the complete stripping away of the soil down to bare rock. The scale of farming operations often has to be very small - the planting of single rows of beans, of single trees, the sowing of chick-peas in rock crevices. Power and tool application is severely restricted. Small and light implements and single draught animals or more recently 'rotavators' alone can negotiate this type of terrain and work very thin soils covering rock platforms. The dangerous effect of the abandonment of any land is obvious. The past has in fact enchained the present. If cultivation is to continue then in order to preserve the artificial ecological balance, created with such effort over the centuries, a social imbalance will become even stronger. Whatever the scale of farming the farmer will always have to grub for soil, build his terraces, carry his plough or manhandle his rotavator for long hours under conditions that will seem less attractive even than those of casual dockside and urban labour.

The first point then is that the landscape indicates how human effort is pinned down by the artificial environment and how restive man is becoming.

The second theme is concerned with the reasons for the historical process of what really amounts to landscape gardening, and with the underlying implications.

Malta's wealth, in historical times at least, has come from a large extra-territorially derived income which has resulted from the Island's positional value. It is possible that even in prehistoric times Malta was never self-sufficient. The great temple building cultures of Malta and Gozo may well have maintained their master masons on imported wealth. Certainly Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs and Normans all occupied Malta because of its strategic position and took wealth in rather than removed it. The Order of St. John held it as an outpost of Christendom maintained by the Knights' possessions on the European mainland. Britain has similarly supported the Island's economy in return for its use as a naval, military and more recently a strategic air centre. Because of Malta's positional importance its inhabitants found it necessary and worth while to create agricultural resources. Because Malta has usually been an outpost the society and its works have attained the unstable equilibrium of a siege life.

At least since Arab occupation a duality has appeared in the community. Earliest at Mdina, later in the Three Cities, then in Valletta and the whole Grand Harbour complex, and now around the naval, military and air bases, the garrisons have formed successive nuclei of a cosmopolitan and sophisticated community. This community, literate, trained in the professions and trades has

[See pp. 98-B and 98-C -- Analyst]

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

the glaring skies. This stone, so characteristic of Malta, provides a gradual transition from the open country to the compact, densely populated communities in which the people live.

II

In 1960, just under 329,000 people lived on the islands' 122 square miles. This makes the Maltese archipelago, with a population density of 2,700 per square mile, one of the most thickly populated countries in the world. Slightly over half the population live in the urban area which centres on Valletta and the Grand Harbour. The rest, and the part with which this study is concerned, live in clearly separated villages and towns outside the conurbation. The population of Gozo is 28,000, and that of Comino 30.

The pressure of a numerous and fertile population on a very limited area has long been one of Malta's most serious problems. The Maltese marry rather early and, in the past, have been encouraged by the clergy and public opinion to have large families. But the Church in Malta has finally and officially recognized the problem, and recently opened a medical advisory service for married couples. During the period 1957–60, births averaged 8,600 per annum and deaths 2,820, thus the natural annual increase was about 5,780. As the net emigration during this period was 2,170 annually, the total population increased at an annual rate of approximately 3,610. Emigration, however, has taken off many of the young men and left a surplus of females. In 1960 there were 747 men between the ages of 20 and 34 for every 1,000 women in the same age group.[1]

III

Malta's documented history stretches back over a thousand years. The summary of it given here makes no pretence of originality. With but few exceptions, it is based upon the well-known published sources listed in the Bibliography. My sole object is to enable the reader to see the present political system in its historical perspective.

Throughout history, Malta has been subject to many different

[1] *Statistical Abstract of the Maltese Islands, 1960* (Valletta, Central Office of Statistics, 1961). C, pp. 2–5.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

rulers who sought to control her strategic position and fine natural harbours. Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Greeks and Romans successively occupied the islands. Although it is generally held that Malta and Gozo formed part of the Byzantine Empire, virtually nothing is known of this period of Maltese history. In A.D. 870 the Arabs occupied the islands. Two hundred years later they were replaced by the Normans under Count Roger. After the death of the last Norman king, Malta shared the fate of Sicily and passed successively to the Swabians (1194–1266), the Angevins (1266–1283), the Aragonese (1283–1410), and the Castilians. In 1530, Emperor Charles V handed over Malta and Gozo with their protesting inhabitants as a fief in perpetuity to the Sovereign Military Order of St. John of Jerusalem, a powerful body of celibate nobles vowed to helping the poor, caring for the sick and waging war on Islam. Napoleon drove out the Knights in 1798, and in 1800 Britain replaced the French. The islands were formally ceded to Britain under the terms of the Treaty of Paris in 1814. Since then they have remained a British possession.

The most important recorded event in Malta's early history was the shipwreck of St. Paul in A.D. 60.[1] During the three months he stayed in Malta, he is popularly believed to have converted the people to Christianity. Whether he converted many is a moot point, but it is a fact that he baptized the Roman governor, Publius, who became Malta's first Bishop. The Maltese are intensely proud of the apostolic origin of their religion. *Missierna San Pawl*, 'Our Father St. Paul', as he is usually called, is the principal patron saint of the islands, and the feast of his shipwreck is a national celebration. Not surprisingly, there are many local legends about him. One holds that the first people to heed his gospel were the villagers of Naxxar, and that his preaching there was heard by the people of Xewkija in Gozo.

The line of bishops established with Publius was broken during the long period of Moslem rule. Count Roger, however, re-established and endowed an episcopal see. He also helped to arrange other details of ecclesiastical organization which had lapsed while Malta was under Arab domination. The present line of Maltese bishops dates from this period.

Malta had a considerable measure of local autonomy during the Aragonese and Castilian periods. Public affairs were administered

[1] Acts 27 and 28.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

by the officials of the governing body, or *Università*. This body, which met in Mdina, the old capital of the island, was composed of representatives of the nobles, learned men, secular priests, merchants and artisans elected by all the family heads in the towns and villages of Malta and Gozo. The Knights of St. John, however, severely limited the authority of the Università, and during their final years it was little more than a public corporation responsible for the importation of scarce foodstuffs.

The Order made itself responsible for local government. It controlled and financed the local militia, police, courts, water supply, public works, hospitals and charities. The government of the Order was highly centralized, and all key posts were held by Knights, though many of the lesser administrative offices were given to Maltese nobles, lawyers and clerks. The authority of the Order was made effective in the rural areas through the police and the ten Captains who were in charge of military garrisons and arsenals, located at strategic points for internal security and defence against war parties and corsairs, and were also responsible for mobilizing the militia. This paternalistic system of administration came to an abrupt end when Napoleon drove the Knights from the islands. Their departure marked the end of an era.

Napoleon remained in Malta only eight days, but they were busy days. According to Laferla, 'it is certain that no one in the space of a few days attempted more, did more and upset the Maltese more than he did.'[1] He set up a nominated council of Maltese to see to civil administration, remodelled the tribunals along French lines and established twelve municipal councils. He abolished the nobility. He closed the University, established a central technical college and founded fifteen government elementary schools. He also sent sixty sons of wealthy families off to study at republican colleges in Paris at their parents' expense.

'All this and probably much more would the Maltese have patiently tolerated,' says Laferla, 'had Napoleon not interfered with religion.'[2] For he set out to curtail the influence of the Church. He limited the jurisdiction of the Bishop to purely ecclesiastical affairs, ordered the expulsion from the islands of all non-Maltese clergy and reduced the number of clerics. He also instituted civil marriage, gave protection to the Jews and forbade

[1] A. V. Laferla, *The Story of Man in Malta* (3rd ed.; Malta, A. C. Aquilina and Co., 1958), p. 144.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 148.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

the clergy to charge for their services. Finally, he decreed that no foreign power, even the Pope, might interfere in local religious administration.

By these acts, the French attacked values that were at the very foundation of the Maltese social structure. Moreover, the new government aggravated the discontent by its failure to meet its financial commitments. Less than two months later, the suppressed hostility flared into savage revolt when the authorities tried to auction off the property of the Carmelite church in Mdina. The citizens rose, massacred the town's garrison and burned their bodies. Then, led by Notary Vitale and Canon Caruana, a powerful cotton merchant who later became Bishop, they penned up the main French force under General Vaubois behind the fortifications of Valletta and the Three Cities. Two years later the French surrendered to the British force which had come to assist the Maltese.

Under British rule, Malta changed from a theocracy ruled by a religious order, to a self-governing colony with an active internal political life. Administrative posts gradually passed to Maltese hands, and today the civil service, apart from a few foreign experts, is completely Maltese. But in spite of a long flirtation with various forms of local and regional government, there are still no village mayors or councillors. The new civic committee in Gozo is an exception which will be discussed in the following chapter. Early in their rule, the British abolished the Università. To appease the wounded dignity of the nobles, they divided Malta into six districts under the nominal authority of Lords Lieutenant, chosen from the nobility. These officers were in charge of civil affairs, and presided over district courts. Each was assisted by syndics, deputies with magisterial powers, who lived in the villages. In 1839, this system of local government was abandoned as inefficient and costly, and district magistrates, also called syndics, were appointed from the class of advocates. Later, the government established district consultative committees to advise it on local needs and to coordinate health measures during epidemics. These committees were only partly successful, and were also abandoned. In 1896 the government finally abolished the office of syndic, and, in the interest of economy, closed the last district courts in 1913. After that, except for the Magistrate's Court in Gozo, the administration of justice remained centralized in Valletta.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

In the early years of its rule, Britain moved slowly but firmly to restrict the authority of the Church. As one of its first steps, it imposed a mortmain law which forced the Church to sell off bequests of immovable property within one year. In 1828, it abolished the right of sanctuary and restricted the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts to purely spiritual matters. Shortly afterwards, the Diocese of Malta, until then subject to the Metropolitan of Palermo, was made directly dependent on the Holy See.

In spite of the inroads Britain made on the power of the Church, the relations between the two have, on the whole, remained extremely cordial. This friendliness has been due very largely to the considerable protection which Britain has given to the Church in Malta. To begin with, it is protected from the competition of other religions. The missionary activities of groups such as the Bible Society and the Salvation Army have been severely restricted. Moreover, the government reserves the right to ban public religious ceremonies by non-Catholics if they threaten to disturb the peace. Catholic precepts regarding education and marriage are also safeguarded, for education is on Catholic religious principles, and divorce and civil marriage are not possible under Maltese law. Furthermore, the Archbishop is accorded high honour, and in the jealously guarded order of precedence he is second only to the Governor. Both the Archbishop and the Bishop of Gozo are exempt from the jurisdiction of the criminal courts.

In addition, the first Maltese elected government passed a law in 1922, declaring the Roman Catholic religion the religion of the country. Article 161 of the Malta Criminal Code makes it a criminal offence to vilify in public the Catholic religion or its ministers.[1]

Constitutional development in Malta has been a painful and slow process; for it is not a simple matter to give representative government to a fortress. The first constitution in 1835 provided for a council of government composed of five office holders, including the Governor and the Bishop, and three nominated dignitaries. Since then, there have been no less than nine different constitutions. Those promulgated before the First World War established an oligarchical system. Property restrictions on those allowed to vote and hold office resulted in elections by and for members of the landed, professional and merchant classes. Further-

[1] Act XVIII, 1933.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

be illuminated and that only one band on the eve and one on the day of the feast would be allowed. Although they are now ignored, the regulations also placed limits upon the variety, quantity and duration of firework displays. Finally, they drew attention to the already existing regulations that church decorations and new works of art introduced for secondary feasts should be less costly and beautiful than those for titular feasts.[1]

Parish priests were expected to insist on the observance of these regulations, and they succeeded so well that some secondary feasts were reduced to minor celebrations. Moreover, the *piks* between the partiti in Żabbar and Qrendi was so violent that the secondary feasts there were suppressed completely.[2] This served as a stern warning to others.

II

The story of the origin and development of the festa partiti in Farrug is in many respects similar to the accounts which I collected about festa partiti in other villages. It might, therefore, be helpful to examine it in some detail. Before 1877 there were no festa partiti in the village; everyone co-operated in the celebration of the feast of St. Martin, the patron of the parish. By all accounts it was a humble one, and lasted only one day. This period is described as an idyllic time during which the village was happy and united. But in 1876 a new parish priest arrived, and after that the scene began to change. Dun Rokku, the new priest, not only had a strong personal devotion to the saint after whom he had been named, but he was also from a village where there was a strong secondary partit devoted to St. Roque. Within a year he established a confraternity dedicated to St. Roque in order to 'inject some more life into this rural parish', according to the president of the St. Roque Band Club. The first feast in honour of St. Roque was celebrated in October 1878 to mark the establishment of the confraternity. Although the new secondary feast was at first a simple affair, it and the titular feast grew during the next few years.

[1] Concilium Regionale Melitense (1935), *Decreta* (Malta, Empire Press, 1936), p. 91.

[2] In Żabbar the devotion to St. Michael, the secondary patron, died out almost completely, though the *piks* between the bands has persisted. But in Qrendi the devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes, the secondary patron, has continued as strong as ever. In 1938 the Archbishop reinstated the confraternity dedicated to her, which his predecessor suppressed in 1935, but the partit band is still not allowed to play for her feast.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

few years. In 1880 the new confraternity dedicated an altar in the church to its patron, and by 1886 some persons were beginning to grumble about having to pay for another feast. There was a feeling of 'you collect for your feast, and we'll collect for ours.'

In 1888 an incident occurred which changed the course of the rivalry between the supporters of the two saints, which until then appears to have been rather mild. Dun Rokku, who was the procurator of the parish church, tried to increase the rent on some of the local property it owned. There was an outcry, and some persons went to the Bishop to complain that not only had Dun Rokku been diverting parish funds to buy new street decorations for the feast of St. Roque, but he was also raising rents to continue this work. The complaints resulted in an investigation, following which the procura of the church was taken from Dun Rokku and given to a prominent member of the village, who favoured St. Martin. This action, not surprisingly, infuriated Dun Rokku. From that day onward, so the accounts relate, he threw his full support openly behind the feast of St. Roque.

Some time after this, the partiti each formed their own social clubs. According to St. Martin supporters, their club grew out of a pre-existing band club, but that of their rivals was not established until after the First World War. They thus consider that they have seniority. St. Roque partisans, on the other hand, deny this seniority. They maintain that both clubs came into being out of the former club around the turn of the century. Consequently they have equal seniority. However, both clubs claim that the records crucial to the question of seniority were destroyed by enemy action during the last war. There is thus no documentary evidence for either claim, a fact which makes for deadlock whenever the issue of seniority is raised.

Dun Rokku was a strongminded priest, and he ruled the village for fifty-six years. When he finally died in 1932 at the age of 90, he was blind and deaf. During his many years in the parish he did much to beautify the church. Unfortunately, so people recount, he also introduced the hated partiti that divided the village. Through a variety of means at the disposal of a parish priest, he succeeded in wooing or coercing three-fourths of the village into his partit. There are many stories about the old man and the methods he used to recruit supporters. One is that he would make it difficult for people to marry unless they were, or became, members of the

94 FESTA PARTITI

103 him, after 1850 (in Naxxar, Għargħur, Kirkop and Xagħra, for
175 example) he was chosen as patron of the new parish churches of
621 Kalkara, Qala and Msida. Moreover, four parishes have secondary
776 feasts dedicated to him (Rabat, Għaxaq, Kirkop and Żebbuġ).
794 Besides these Għargħur and Siġġiewi had St. Joseph partiti which
796 succumbed to the 1935 Church regulations.

621 The identification of secondary partiti in general with St.
794 Joseph is also perhaps reflected in the colour most have chosen as
822 their symbol. It is blue, the colour of the banner of the Confraternity of St. Joseph. The supporters of many secondary partiti, even if their saint is the Virgin Mary, wave blue scarves about to show their loyalty to it. Their rivals display red scarves, after the colour of the banner of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, whose members support the titular saint.

463 The correlation between partiti and occupational class is also
621 shown in the high proportion of village priests who are sons of
793 families supporting the titular feasts. I once asked the leader of a
794 secondary partit why this was so. He replied that it was only natural since the families of the titular partiti were in much closer contact with the parish priest. Thus their sons, rather than those of rivals, more often became his young helpers and altar boys and received the necessary recommendations to the seminary and other church-run schools. From there, some became priests, and others assumed positions of leadership with the various associations. Other informants suggested it was because the 'best' families support the titular saints, and therefore can afford the additional school fees and loss of earning power that are involved in having their sons become priests.

Of the 41 priests born and now resident in Żurrieq, Kirkop, Qrendi, Mqabba, Luqa, Għaxaq and Żebbuġ, 33 (80 per cent) are sons of families supporting the titular feasts. This percentage gains added importance by the fact that in each of these villages the secondary partit is either equal to or larger than the titular partit. The exception is Żebbuġ, where the secondary partit is decidedly smaller than the titular one. In Farruġ, though the local priest is from a St. Roque family, all the offices connected with the parish church, and 23 of the 30 key positions with Catholic Action, the Football Club and the Labour Committee, are in the hands of St. Martin supporters. Thus the members of titular partiti are not only closer to established authority, they often become part of it.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

[p.134]

CHAPTER IX
Conclusion

128 This study has been concerned with Maltese village politics. It has looked at the ways in which persons and groups compete to influence the outcome of disputes and community decisions in accordance with their own interests. In particular, it has examined the nature of the groups, the issues between them and the means by which they influenced their outcome. The various groups involved varied from parishes to political parties, and from associations to factions. The issues between them, though they also varied, all had one thing in common: in one way or another they involved the Church. Whether the competition between parishes for the title of Basilica, between festa partiti over their saints or between the supporters of Mintoff and their opponents, all were somehow related to the Church. Much of the political action we studied involved attempts to influence its decisions.

175 795 It may now be asked why the Church is so intimately involved in political activity at all levels. Part of the answer lies in history, for in the absence of any form of civil government at the village level, the Church represented the interests of the people to the secular authorities governing the islands: first to the Knights of St. John, and later to the British. Thus for centuries the Church played the important political role of defender of the interests of the people. Its importance in the political and its dominance in the religious sphere reinforced each other. It is not strange that at the 795 village level the Church controls the outcome of many of the issues considered of importance to the community, since for centuries a village has had little corporate reality outside the religious framework. That is, it only assumes some semblance of [n 94] group solidarity or unity as a parish. As a parish its inhabitants own property, meet for worship, celebrate feasts, have a collective leader in their parish priest and a common symbol and patron in their titular saint. As members of a village, considered as a community outside the structure of the Church, they have and can do none of these things.

3: Buxton D-5 (1920-1921) 1922 EZ6 Malta EZ6

of metals to the island. Bronze Age pottery is less highly finished than the Neolithic ware, but although the two are certainly distinct, there are transitional forms.

From an ethnological point of view it would appear that the Bronze Age, or the end of the Neolithic Age, was in many places a crucial period. It is difficult, however, to parallel this in Malta by linking up the osteological and the archæological material. As we shall hope to show later, the Megalithic people in Malta appear to be very distinct from the later inhabitants, and to present certain Armenoid characteristics. Sir Arthur Evans[1] has pointed out that there was a western colonial movement from the mainland of Greece towards the close of the period which he has termed Late Minoan III. There is evidence of such a movement in cemeteries near Syracuse. Up to the present, however, there is no evidence of Malta being connected with the East at so early a date. It has further been suggested that at some period in the early history of the island a complete destruction of the old population took place.

The sherds from Kallilia appear to be similar in fabric and design to those of the Hal Tarxien Bronze Age. During the so-called "Phœnician" period we have cultural evidence of connection with the Ægean and North Africa, and it would appear that then, if not earlier, the final shaping of the present population was taking place, and that the mixed "island people" of the Eastern Mediterranean were sufficiently firmly established to swamp any further immigration of invaders belonging to a pure Mediterranean strain.

[144] The Punic influence, though culturally no doubt of importance, does not seem to have altered the population physically, and though at this time the connection with North Africa was undoubtedly close, it was not sufficiently strong to counteract the change wrought by the sea rovers from the islands, and to restore a type similar to that of Neolithic times.

Until the Roman occupation at the end of the third century B.C. Malta appears to have been closely connected with North Africa. Rome held the islands as a military or semi-military outpost until nearly the end of the second century A.D. The period usually known as "Roman" in Malta should be more correctly described as Romano-Maltese; although Rome was the ruling power and much Roman culture was introduced, there are few references to Malta in Roman literature, and from an ethnological point of view the island was certainly working out its own salvation.

The archipelago was given practical autonomy and made a municipium about A.D. 177. On the division of the Empire, in A.D. 395, the islands were taken over by the Eastern Empire, to which they were certainly ethnologically akin. Invasions of barbarians may possibly have occurred, but when the Arabs captured the islands in 870 they found a Byzantine garrison in occupation. Robert of Sicily, with a

[1] "Prehistoric Tombs of Cnossos," *Archæologia*, LIX, p. 107.

3: Buxton D-5 (1920-1921) 1922 EZ6 Malta EZ6

small handful of Knights, took over Malta in 1000. The islands became part of the kingdom of Sicily, and shared its varying fortunes till they were ceded to the Knights of St. John by the Emperor Charles V in 1530.

For the next three centuries the history of the Knights is so intimately concerned with the history of Malta that we must at least briefly consider the general position of the Order.

The Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem were finally ejected from the coast of Syria at the end of the thirteenth century. They occupied Rhodes in 1308. This island formed their home for over two hundred years. Early in 1523 they were driven from Rhodes, taking with them 4000 Rhodians. Given a temporary home at Viterbo by Pope Clement VII, a member of their own Order, they finally received the island of Malta from the Emperor Charles V under conditions of nominal feudal submission, to wit, the Grand Master to send a falcon to the Viceroy of Sicily every All Souls' Day.

The Order had an international character, and in the sixteenth century was divided into eight "Languages" or "Langues," according to the origin of the Knights, namely, Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Aragon, England, Germany and Castile. The English "Language" was suppressed in 1540, previous to which time many of the Knights who had been in England (the Grand Priory was situated in Clerkenwell) had either fled to Malta or been executed. The fiction of an English "Language" was, however, kept, and as late as 1782, on the foundation of a Bavarian "Language," this latter was united to the old English "Langue," which of course in reality no longer existed, and called the Anglo-Bavarian. The dominant element in the population of the Knights was certainly French, and the three French "Langues"—Provence, Auvergne and France—were certainly, both ethnologically and politically, the most important. The latter aspect was reflected in the great number of French Grand Masters.

For a generation after the occupation of the island by the Knights, Malta gradually succeeded in establishing an important position in the Mediterranean. There seems little doubt that men like Strozzi, La Vallette, Charles of Lorraine, and de Romegas were practically pirates, at least as far as their treatment of the Turk was concerned, and at this time a very large number of Turkish slaves, presumably chiefly of Negro origin, were introduced into the island. In 1564 Suliman the Magnificent decided to attack Malta. The story of the siege of Malta in 1565 is a magnificent passage in the history of this very distinguished Order of Chivalry. It only concerns us so far as it resulted in a reorganization of the fortifications of the island and the building of the great city of Valletta, called after the Grand Master of the Order, Jean Parisot de la Vallette. It is important for our purpose to remember that when the Turks were eventually driven from the island, the Order had only 600 men capable of bearing arms who had survived the struggle.

3: Buxton D-5 (1920-1921) 1922 EZ6 Malta EZ6

175 169 361 The building of Valletta was begun by La Vallette and continued by subsequent Grand Masters. The majority of the labourers employed appear to have been slaves, although a certain number of men are said to have been imported from Sicily and Calabria. It is difficult to estimate how far an industrial population, which must have amounted to over 8000 men, can have affected the ethnology of the island.

175 161 361 It will be seen, then, that the population of the urban districts, including as it does such a very large proportion of the total inhabitants of the island, is comparatively new to its present surroundings. We have not got in Valletta, as we have in some parts of the Mediterranean, a town site which has been occupied more or less continuously since the dawn of history. We do not know, of course, what was the condition of Mount Sceberras before Valletta was built, but it certainly was not in any way an urban area, the old town having been what is now known as Citta Vecchia.

175 648 The subsequent history of the Order is not of great importance from the ethnological point of view. The Knights did not succeed in suppressing the Barbary corsairs, but carried on a number of sea-faring expeditions, especially in the Levant, although during the seventeenth century there were numerous sea battles between the Knights and the corsairs.

175 433 464 During the occupation of the Order, the food supply of Malta was imported from Sicily, and when diplomatic relations were strained between the Order and the King of Spain, shortage of food often became very marked. The relations between the Maltese and the Knights are difficult to sum up briefly. During the earlier days the privileges of the natives were only limited as far as military necessity, and, to a certain extent, financial obligations demanded. In later days the Maltese were employed as labourers, as soldiers, and as sailors, and although we find that in many cases the Grand Masters behaved generously to native women and children, the general record of the Knights, especially in the years before the final crash came, were unworthy of the ideals of an ascetic Order.

175 648 The Order ruled the island until the final break-up of the last relics of Mediæval Europe by Napoleon. The French garrison surrendered to the British in 1800, after holding the island for two years. Malta was formally ceded to the British crown in 1814.

IV.—Demography.

161 174 It has been suggested that the large number of bones found in the Hypogæum is evidence of a large population in Neolithic times. The place is, however, probably an ossuary, and may have been in use over a long period. The earlier records are for the most part unreliable. In 870, 3000 Greeks are said to have been killed, and 3614 women and 5000 children sold into captivity. This suggests a large population. In 1530 Boisgelin's figure (23) is 15,000, but Miège (27) suggests a population of 29,659. After the attack of the Turks in 1566, the total is said to have dropped to 10,000. The emissary of Pope Gregory XIII reported the

4: Cassar P-4, 5 (no date) 1964 EZ6 Malta EZ6

Medical Votive Offerings in the Maltese Islands

PAUL CASSAR

THE MALTESE GROUP OF ISLANDS—Malta, Gozo, Kemmuna, Kemmunet and Filfla—cover an area of just over 120 square miles. They form a stepping-stone between Europe and Africa, being fifty-eight miles distant from Sicily and 180 miles away from the North African shore. Malta and Gozo are renowned for the number of Stone Age temples they contain. Archaeologists have expressed the opinion that some of the enclosures of these temples were sacred to a healing deity (Zammit 1926, p. 53). This is suggested by the discovery of clay and limestone objects consisting of (1) two models of women lying asleep on a kind of stretcher of wicker work, and (2) several votive offerings in the shape of parts of the human body (Zammit & Singer 1924, pp. 75–6).

It is believed that the sleeping ladies represent devotees who went to the Hypogeum temple at Hal Saflieni, near Pawla, to consult the oracle through the practice of oneiromancy. This was a form of dream interpretation after the patient had been aroused from a hypnotic state induced deliberately by means of drugs or other means (Zammit 1935, p. 38). In ancient Egypt dreams were regarded with reverence and the faithful believed that their prayers were rewarded by the gods with an indication, in their dreams, of the remedies which their illness required (Wilkinson 1837, III, p. 394). Similar practices prevailed also in the temple-hospitals of classical Greece where the patient is said to have had the line of treatment revealed to him in his sleep (Pavey 1951, p. 59). It is, therefore, quite possible that such methods were likewise followed in Malta by the Hypogeum priests in the treatment of disease about 1500 B.C. Whatever might have happened in Malta in neolithic days, it is very striking to come across similar parallels in modern times where sick persons claim to have been healed by a heavenly power while in the sleeping state.

The following cases were recorded in 1890, the first being the most interesting as the patient fell asleep in the church itself:

(i) A woman had been subject to a purulent inflammation of the mouth for fifteen years. She had recourse to the Virgin Mary and while praying at Ta Pinu church (Gharb, Gozo) she was overtaken by extreme somnolence. She woke up with the conviction that the Madonna had granted her the desired favour; in fact, she recovered completely from her illness within three days.

(ii) Maria Cachia, from a village in Gozo, was so gravely ill from puerperal fever that it was decided to give her the Last Sacraments. Her mother made a vow to the Virgin Mary and anointed the patient on the forehead and breasts with oil obtained from the sanctuary lamp of Ta Pinu church. Maria fell into a calm sleep. Our Lady appeared to her in a vision, touched her on the parts smeared with the oil and healed her. On waking she was 'happy and smiling and left her bed completely cured'.

4: Cassar P-4, 5 (no date) 1964 EZ6 Malta EZ6

(iii) Giovanna Debrincat had been suffering from depression with religious scruples for eight months. Her symptoms became acute one day in February with extreme anxiety, agitation, and insomnia. This phase lasted for four consecutive days and nights in spite of the efforts of the doctor and a priest to reassure her and placate her. Finally her relatives annointed her with the sanctuary oil and appealed to the Blessed Virgin to cure her. The patient immediately became tranquil and had a peaceful sleep. When she woke up, all her symptoms had disappeared (*Iddevot ta Maria*, 1890).

NEOLITHIC VOTIVE OFFERINGS

The custom of offering 'ex-votos' to the deity for favours received is not limited to the Maltese Islands and goes back to very remote times. The neolithic 'ex-votos' of Malta are made of clay and limestone, and measure from 1¼ to 3¼ inches in height. No less than fifteen of them, consisting of the following anatomical forms, have been found:

(i) Faces: 2.
(ii) Hand: 1.
(iii) Female torsos with large abdomen, pendulous breasts, and prominent genitalia: 4.
(iv) Kneeling female (?) torso with arms folded on breast: 2.
(v) Fragment of female statuette consisting of lower abdomen, both thighs, and right leg: 1.
(vi) Female body cut short in the neck and upper parts of the thighs; the left arm is bent on the nape of the neck and the right upper limb points to the genitalia which are very clearly shown. The abdomen and breasts are very full and a swelling fills the left groin while pieces of white shells are stuck in the armpits, groins, umbilicus, mons veneris, and other parts.
(vii) Female pelvis with upper parts of thighs and sexual triangle: 2.
(viii) Legs: 2 (Zammit & Singer 1924, p. 67).

The Roman occupation of Malta (218 B.C.–A.D. 397) is represented by one solitary 'ex-voto' consisting of a clay model of the lateral view of a leg and foot. It was found quite recently with other Roman objects in the north-west part of the island (Plate 1, Fig. 2). The inhabitants of the Maltese Islands were converted to Christianity by St Paul in A.D. 60. No more 'ex-votos' can be traced for many hundreds of years until they reappear in the eighteenth century under the influence of the Catholic Church. The interruption in the time-sequence and the change of religious beliefs do not, however, prevent us from perceiving that they have a common purpose and that the 'ex-votos' of Stone Age and Roman times foreshadow the similar ones of later years. Indeed the same ideational process links the ancient ones with those of our own times.

Anatomical 'ex-votos' are still preserved in many of the Catholic churches of Malta and Gozo and in several wayside shrines in the countryside and in niches in the towns. They are either figures of the complete human body or of parts of it. The former consist of the front view of babies with the trunk and limbs swathed in bands like a mummy; and of side views of men and women in a kneeling posture with their hands joined in prayer over their breasts or else holding a symbolical heart. The men are turned towards the left and the women look towards the right. The models representing parts of the

5: Cremona B-3, 4 (no date) 1923
EZ6 Malta EZ6

In some districts doors or knockers are draped with black crape.

(*d*) The lowering of window blinds for some months. Some people, who follow old customs, replace all window curtains by linen sheets.

(*e*) The hiring of poor women and beggars to pray over and watch the corpse for the whole night. This custom prevails mostly in Gozo. In old days official female mourners, named *neüüieha* (from *neüüah*, "to cry") were employed. The practice was abolished in Malta during the plague of A.D. 1676.[1] Sicilians employed mourners called Praeficae or Reputatrices, a custom of Greek and Roman origin and practised by the Irish until A.D. 1849. It still prevails among the Corsicans and the Sahara tribes of Algeria. The old ceremonial of the Maltese female mourners is described by Abela as follows :—

They wore trailing veils (*kurkâr*), and when they entered the premises of the deceased they cut down the bower vines in the yard and threw the flower pots from the balconies and windows into the street. They searched the house for the finest piece of china, dashed it on the floor, and mixed the fragments with ashes from the hearth. They boiled the whole together in a pot, and with the mixture washed the door posts and window shutters of the house. During these proceedings they sang couplets which ended in long-drawn sighs and lamentations. Then they gathered round the corpse and knelt down, extolling the virtues of the deceased, the relations joining in their mourning.

(*f*) An oil lamp is often lit and left for forty days before the Crucifix or image of the Madonna in the death chamber. This is supposed to please the soul of the departed, whose ghost is in this way prevented from haunting the house. In some of the Gozo villages the persons attending the corpse to the burial-ground return in procession after the funeral mass to the room of the deceased, where they kneel down and say the rosary before the Crucifix, placed on a chest covered with white cloth, and between two lighted candles which are afterwards replaced by the devotional oil lamps. The belief still lingers that the

[1] Abela and Ciantar, *Malta Illustrata*, vol. ii. p. 794.

SECTION 1 : The Village in Maltese Rural Society.

121 369 Despite the small size of the Maltese Islands, the physical units in which the people live - the towns and villages (Map 1) - possess diverse characteristics. Sometimes administrative, sometimes morphological (i.e. pertaining to the physical arrangement of functional parts), these provide important evidence of the social and economic nature of society. The present report is concerned with rural society and with farming in the Islands where it is clear that the 'village' both reflects and shapes the character of the farmer. The historical evolution of the settlements cannot be examined here but a brief mention must be made of some important historical facts.

175 369 [361] [396] During their rule in Malta, from 1530 to 1798, the Knights of St. John built Valletta (after 1575) and founded an associated dockyard and surrounding towns. These creations have since expanded and merged to become the nucleus of modern Urban Malta. Before 1530, urban society had existed only in the capital, Notabile (Mdina)[1], and in a few large town-villages, none of which lay on the coast or adjoined the Grand Harbour. Nearly the whole of Malta and Gozo had been previously rural in that the population depended on a subsistence, peasant agriculture, with alternative employment existing only in the larger settlements or in the little harbour at the Borgo (Cospicua). Under the Knights, Valletta on the coast succeeded Notabile in the centre of the Island as capital; and the large town-villages (by pre-1530 standards) of Żebbuġ, Siġġiewi, Żejtun, and Żurrieq declined in relative importance.

[241] [464]

[161] [396] [434] [712] [707] Little change otherwise occurred until the century and a half of British rule during which the Valletta nucleus and associated townships became dominant and the increase in the population accelerated[2]. The national economy became overwhelmingly dependent on the naval and commercial dockyards in the first place and, later, on the army and air-force bases[3]. Thus the old rural settlements became relatively if not absolutely of little importance.

RURAL SOCIETY

369 241 433 It is reasonable to talk of the farming communities as being synonomous with 'rural' settlements in Malta but the position demands more precise definition. Certainly the largest part of the Maltese rural-dwelling population has been based on agriculture - whether the peasant subsistence of the past or the commercial farming of today. Peasant subsistence farming in small-holding units, supplying almost all the needs of the family working the farm, is a type of farming in which money plays little or no part. It has faded very rapidly

178 369 which are now 'rural' on the basis of the size of the farming element are the old settlements.[4] The non-agricultural Urban zone is a comparatively recent growth around Valletta and the Three Cities and lacks the traditional agricultural basis of most of the Fringe and Rural areas where the villages grew little in size and declined considerably in relative importance.

178 241 433 464 166 A closer investigation of the declining relative importance of farming within the rural villages themselves over the past hundred years (v. Appendix 1D, vii and Graph) reveals that during some periods economic prosperity in Malta has attracted labour away from the land but, equally, that these moves were largely temporary and that there was a return to farming as soon as boom conditions disappeared. This was the case, for example, during the last decade of the nineteenth and the first decade of the present century (B/381). Since 1931 there has been a general retreat from farming (v. Graph) along with a socio-economic emancipation of the Maltese farmer in which the traditional ties with the land have been loosened. The earlier, temporary moves lacked this social rejection of an old way of life. The farmers who left their fields for industrial work at the end of the nineteenth century were in fact never very far from the land upon which they relied as a stand-by when the boom conditions declined. Today the farmer's son, far from maintaining a foothold in agriculture, is as fast losing touch with the land as he is with the community which it supported. If a depression were to appear along with any limitation in emigration a return to the land would be less easy than in times past. This would be due not to a shortage of land for farming or to difficulty in getting work in farm labouring but to the current estrangement between farmer's son and farming, an estrangement as much sociological as economic in character.

178 464 241 The earlier temporary moves from the land were partial rather than total in that the bulk of farmers and farm-workers who had sought urban jobs had come from the Fringe or 'Suburban' areas rather than from the Rural districts proper (B/381). The present move away is however from all parts of countryside. It is evident that both today and in the past the availability of alternative employment has been the governing factor. The earlier periods of economic prosperity mentioned brought only temporary alternative opportunity for

● 175 464 288 the farm-worker. In fact until the present century the only large-scale alternative to field work for the rural Maltese and Gozitan was cotton spinning and weaving. Even here possibilities were limited. Cotton growing and manufacture in the Islands developed fast during the eighteenth

175 288 464 century but went into decline early in the nineteenth, particularly after the Spanish Government prohibited all imports of yarn (1800). But the industry was slow to die and is today undergoing something of a re-birth under a protective monopoly[5]. Cotton provided, during the nineteenth century, much employment, particularly for women who, in 1861, amounted to 96% of all cotton workers (B/167 - 1861). The small male labour force was mainly engaged in the beating and dyeing departments of the industry. This industry moreover, was centred in the villages and was essentially a home craft, so that the worker in cotton was never very far removed from home or farm, and field work was an alternative when cotton production declined. This decline accelerated towards the close of the nineteenth century but was not spread at an even rate over the whole of the rural area of the Islands. The total decline was due to external economic factors but, within the Islands themselves, the industry survived longest in its traditional 'core area' of Rabat and Żebbuġ. "The cotton industry persisted where the skills were greatest - where it now exists as a craft industry" (B/381).

175 178 241 369 464 [288] [396] [504] However the harbour areas and the dockyard were providing work and opportunity on an increasing scale towards the end of the nineteenth century and during the first quarter of this[6]. "The population nearest the harbour profited first, and there was a spreading outwards, as more and more of the Island sought work in the port. As the attraction of the harbour area spread, so interest in the declining cotton industry decreased". (B/381) A new alternative was thus appearing and one very different in that it meant a greater break with home, farm and village than had been the case with cotton. Agriculture itself came to feel the impact of the alternatives. "Gradually the whole Island became drawn into the economic sphere of the harbour area, and the population of the rural area became less and less dependent on agriculture for its livelihood" (B/381). This is a key factor in 178 an understanding of rural Malta and Gozo today. The second, 241 considered later in more detail, is the social change which 369 has been brought about by the emancipation of the villager 241 through direct and indirect education and contact with the 433 people and ideas of the world outside. Together these two forces, the one an extension and magnification of what had happened before on a temporary basis and the other a consequence of the trend towards social enlightenment which has been a widespread feature of the twentieth-century world, have given the farmer an escape. On the economic level he has the new range of employment opportunities indicated, while his newly acquired literacy and education is making it

6:Beeley K-5 (1957-1958) 1959 EZ6 Malta EZ6

17 of Malta and Gozo than in the towns, where dockyard develop-
621 ments and other industrialization have produced a new kind of
793 social environment. This is an important subject in itself
795 but, for the present, attention is to be confined to the rural districts where change has to date been slower than in the towns but where the same factors are appearing now along with the rapid 'urbanization' of the villages.

In traditional Malta the function of the clergy[10]
• 175 extended far beyond matters of religion. The priests were
621 the teachers, doctors, and legal advisers as well as spiritual
793 guardians of the people. Government-organized education began
871 in the nineteenth century. Previously such formal education as there was had been under ecclesiastical auspices. The clergy were literate when almost all the rest of the population was not. This concentration of learning produced a situation in which only the clergy were able to step forward to take the lead among Maltese, for the nobility, which might have been expected to provide a focus and leadership, tended
[669] to be more Italian or Spanish than Maltese. Even revolution-
[648] ary leaders came from the ranks of the clergy; the Mannarino Revolt against the Order of St. John (1775) and the rising against the French during the brief occupation of the Islands by Napoleon (1798-1800) are instances.

175 For some centuries before the arrival of the British in
795 1800, the Church had built up its dominating position in both village and town. Even the educated townsman going to the
[874] University came strongly under the influence of the Church,
[178] for the University, itself a Jesuit foundation of long standing, was and still is best known for its Theology. However, during the nineteenth century, the major changes within the Church of Malta were connected with purely administrative details of keeping pace with the rapidly rising population[1].

Many new parishes were created in the second half of the nineteenth century and in the early part of the twentieth. The Archbishopric of Malta was established in 1831 with the separation from the jurisdiction of Palermo, and the Bishopric
[178] of Gozo was founded in 1863. A movement of great sociological importance during the present century has been the growth of the Lay Apostolate in the Islands, especially in the urban areas. This represents a counter-attack against the forces which are today tending to detract from the traditional omnipotence of the Church. It is only a matter of time before the problems which the Church is facing in the towns will loom much larger than at present in the country districts and in Gozo[11].

628 are alleged heavy drinkers[12]. The notion held in Gozo that a
186 man of Nadur claims to be more Maltese than Gozitan is held to point to the settlement of that village from Malta at some comparatively recent date[13].

621 Whatever the differences of size, settlement, economic
793 structure or tradition the functional basis of the Maltese
795 village remains pivoted on the Church and the Parish Priest, and a detailed discussion of the present scene becomes largely an attempt to assess the part now played vis-à-vis the Church by the new features and modifications of the old landscape in the present.

175 Here we may consider the history and growth of a young
361 Maltese village, MĠARR, to show how this growing settlement has acquired the essential features common to rural society throughout the Islands (Map 5).

Until the nineteenth century, Malta north of the Victoria Lines had remained without any large settlements, partly on account of the vulnerability of the area to attack from the sea. This is not to say that there was no human activity in the area before 1800 for there is evidence of a small church
[172] in what is now Mġarr as far back as 1500[14]. Evidence, too, of life in other eras is provided by the temple of Bu Hagrat (2,000 B.C.) and the remains of a Roman house near the village.

175 However, in the early part of the nineteenth century,
361 farmers from Mosta began to cultivate the land in what is now
793 the Parish of Mġarr. The account, of the history of one of
795 the families concerned in this settlement, given by Mitchell (B/525), is typical. The numbers involved in the general movement increased as the century advanced until, in 1898, an independent Parish was established. Before 1898, spiritual needs of the farmers were catered for by visiting priests from Żebbuġ, Balzan, Mdina and Mosta itself and the tiny Church of St. Mary was used throughout this period and until 1918. Earlier in the nineteenth century the colonization of Mġarr had been a 'week-day' venture with most farmers returning to their families and homes in Mosta for the week-end and the Sunday Mass. The visiting priests celebrated Sunday morning Mass for those farmers who began to settle in the area per-
175 manently. With the granting of parochial status in 1898, a
346 full-time Parish Priest was appointed who came from Mosta and
[793] settled in the growing village. The first concern was for a new Church and work was begun in 1912, although the popula-
[463] tion of the village at this time was only 1,067 (B/167-1911). Significantly, both the master mason and the architect concerned were Mosta men. Building went ahead slowly on the

[Village of Mġarr]

Building went ahead slowly on the immense construction as costs were defrayed by private subscription in kind and in money, and the villagers were themselves responsible for much of the labouring work. Money and farm produce of every variety was given towards the cost which, in 1939, had passed £10,000 (B/54 - 12.8.1939); this in a parish which even ten years later had no more than 2,218 people (B/167 - 1948).

With the growth of Mġarr, assistant priests were attached to the Parish, notably Father (later Monsignor) Edgar Salamone, who went to the village in 1920 and became Parish Priest a decade later. The work of this one priest not only pays him personal tribute but illustrates the way in which Mġarr acquired the characteristics and features possessed by other villages of much longer standing in the Islands, with the Church itself as the prime consideration and focus of energy and resources. Mgr. Salamone was "sickened by the ignorance and backwardness of the people of Mġarr"[15] and set about establishing some sort of schooling in the village. He acquired premises, used at week-ends by the part-time village barber, and opened a school in 1920 for about 40 children and adults. Three years later a Government elementary school was opened (19.9.1923) and support for this still novel feature of the village grew fast enough for nearly all children to be attending when the Compulsory Attendance Act was passed in 1926.

At this time the health of the villagers was cared for by a Dispensary which opened once a week and by Mgr. Salamone himself. A statement in the Malta Legislative Assembly of 1933 observed that the Priest of Mġarr kept "a medicine chest of his own and people used to call on him at all hours of the day and night. He used to pack up his medical kit and go to anyone's bedside, whenever he was called for" (B/291, p.6). As in all things the villagers turned to their Priest in difficulty or trouble whether spiritual, medical or social, as had been the custom for centuries. In 1933, however, the first medical officer for Mġarr began his duties in the village, and another of the traditional functions of the Priest passed to specialist hands.

After this, interest was turned again to building and the spacious esplanade in front of the Church was laid out in 1935, followed by a nearby construction to house the Police Station, Post Office, Government Dispensary and the District Medical Officer. Once again the villagers themselves were responsible for a great deal of the building work, as they were in the case of the Church which continued to grow until its completion and dedication in 1948 - at a total cost of some £16,000[15]. By the mid-thirties Mġarr had

[Village of Mgarr]

By the mid-Thirties Mgarr had 11.

175 become independent of Mosta as a Police area and had been
722 connected to the Telephone network[15]. Other amenities
648 to reach the village about this time included a number of
[365] levelled roads, although asphalting did not appear until
[491] after the 1939-45 War. During the War years most construction activity was halted. Some 700 refugees from the blitzed harbour areas were billeted in the village; thirty shelters were dug, and about 600 bombs fell in the vicinity of the village destroying two houses and killing three people (B/291). United States' forces camped near Mgarr prior to the Sicily invasion: an Italian aircraft crashed not far away. Mgarr heard about the war and experienced as much of it at first hand as most other rural parts of the Islands lying well away from the Dockyard, air bases and
[434] other strategic targets. Food rationing and Government
[241] control of production put the farmers of Mgarr in as strong a position as elsewhere but at the worst period of the siege even they were reduced to chewing carob beans[12].

36 By the advent of the present decade Mgarr had acquired the normal characteristics of community life of village Malta, with Church, school, police station, dispensary and
[178] doctor, telephones, and roads. The built-up area has since
[794] expanded rapidly. In this present decade, ~~too,~~ the village has gone on to 'catch-up' with older settlements to the extent of establishing the four branches of the Catholic
[795] Action movement (Appendix 4). A most modern and well-
[544] appointed 'oratory' has for five years been the focal point of Catholic teaching and social work in the Parish. Its
[546] theatre holds 700 and shows films on Sundays and special occasions. More recently a commercial cinema has opened in the village but, one understands, it cannot detract from the popularity of the oratory film show.

443 Within the past few years, shops have appeared in the
[366] village which is now independent in this respect for food and general items. Travelling vans, a prominent feature of the countryside, further swell the range of goods available on the spot and are joined in this door to door service by
[484] the weekly paraffin (petrolju) vehicle. For other items
[494] Mgarr housewives still make the journey to Mosta or
[178] Valletta on the buses which operate every few hours; a generation ago their mothers carried bread on their backs each week from Mosta, the parent village.

184 On account of its recent development, Mgarr lacks
794 certain features found in the larger and much older settlements. The Catholic Action is the only Lay Movement in the village - though it is notably active there, and of the Confraternities which are numerous in the older settlements Mgarr has only Three (Appendix 4).

In Malta the countryman still regards Rabat as 15.
178 unofficial capital of the rural areas of his Island; markets
361 are still held there even though the main ones have
[443] gravitated to Valletta and the urban area. The annual 'Imnarja', traditionally one of the main events in the farmers' social calendar, is held nearby[18], while the ancient importance of the Church is reflected in the large number of clergy, churches, confraternities and third orders
[712] found there (Appendix 4). In Gozo, Rabat is the administrative, cultural and economic capital with the old fortified 'Castello' now in large part a deserted ruin.

369 The differing extent to which the villages of Malta and
178 Gozo have been influenced economically by the industrial and urban developments of the dockyard areas and towns are paralleled in the social plane. Traditionally rural centres such as Qormi, Żabbar and Birkirkara have undergone increasing social and cultural attraction towards Valletta and the Urban area along with economic 'de-ruralization' by virtue of their proximity to the towns and harbours. The improvements in amenities and especially in transport facilities have tended to link these Fringe settlements to the Urban area rather than to the countryside which produced them (B/381).

361 A further type of village is exemplified by St. Paul's
178 Bay. This began as a summer-time resort for town and city dwellers during the nineteenth century but attained a sufficient permanence and size to be granted full parochial status in 1905. The analogy in Gozo is Marsalforn though this settlement is perhaps half a century behind St. Paul's Bay in development and presents in winter time the appearance of almost a ghost-town with only a few permanent farmer and fishermen residents.

Birżebbuġa is a class on its own, having grown in the past few decades upon largely non-agricultural foundations of the British and United States' bases, oil installations and some small-scale industry.

128 Using this type of analytical approach, a classification
361 of the villages of Malta and Gozo on the basis of their origin and socio-functional characteristics becomes possible (Richardson (B/561) goes into greater detail concerning the evolution of settlement in Malta itself and considers the development of the present pattern in the light of population growth and movement and other historical factors.)

712 (1) Medieval Capital Fortresses - Mdina in Malta and
● 175 the Castello in Gozo. Both occupy central eminences in
[361] their respective Islands and were used as capitals by the Arabs (in Malta 870-1090) and by the various rulers of Malta
712 between 1090 and the coming of the Knights of St. John in 1530. The former is today a tranquil, residential

6:Beeley K-5 (1957-1958) 1959 EZ6 Malta EZ6

712 museum-piece; the latter ruined apart from the Cathedral and the Law Courts.

361 (2) Attached to each of the two fortresses there grew
● 175 up at an early date suburbs which themselves achieved the status of independent settlements. Rabat is still an important locus for the farming community of rural Malta, while the Rabat in Gozo (or Victoria as it is now known) is the largest settlement in that Island and the only one with any urban features.

361 (3) The medieval town-villages of Malta, other than
175 Rabat, were granted parochial status in 1436. This pattern
103 of large agricultural villages formed the basis of the economic life of the times and even today they retain a strong flavour of the "Old Malta". They were Birkirkara, Qormi (split 1935), Żejtun, Żurrieq, Żebbuġ, Gudja, Naxxar and Siġġiewi. The parallel group of villages in Gozo included Xewkija (1678), Għarb (1679), and Żebbuġ, Xagħra, Nadur and Sannat (all 1688).

(4) Soon after the arrival of the Knights in 1530 building in the Three Cities and on the Xiberras Peninsula began. Thus Senglea (1581) and Cospicua (1584) were given parochial status (Vittoriosa had been one of the two 'parishes' of 1090) and the Valletta parishes of St. Paul and St. Dominic were established on the Peninsula in 1585 and 1587.

(5) Chronologically, the next development was the 'filling-in' of the rural scene with new village centres during the rule of the Knights. In all, thirteen such parishes were established in Malta and ten of these were in what are now the Fringe and Inner Rural areas. They were Tarxien and Kirkop (both 1592), Lija (1594), Għargħur, Safi and Mqabba (all 1598), Mosta (1608), Żabbar (1615), Qrendi (1618), Għaxaq (1626), Luqa (1634), Balzan (1655), and Dingli (1678).

(6) After this spate of parish-building in the hundred years 1580-1680 there was a gap of a century and a half before any new parishes were created. The list then reflects very closely the growth of the Urban area under British rule after 1800 (v. Appendix 1A, and Map 3). Of the eighteen new parishes in Malta eleven were Urban and three in the Fringe zone. The new Urban settlements were Floriana (1844), Msida & Pieta (1867), Sliema (1878, 1918, and 1940), Hamrun (1881), St. Julian's (1891), Kalkara (1898) Pawla (1910), Marsa and Gżira (both 1913); in the Fringe zone came Birżebbuġa (1913), Santa Vennera (1918), and Marsaskala (1949). Other foundations in Malta were Marsaxlokk (1897) and the three new villages in the north -

361 Mellieha (1841), Mgarr (1898) and St. Paul's Bay (1905).
175 In Gozo seven new parishes appeared in just over a century:
103 Ghajnsielem[19] (1855), Qala (1872), Kerbem (1885), San Lawrenz (1893), Fontana (part of Victoria, 1911), Ghasri (1921), and Munxar (1957; v. Sannat, Map 1).

17 361 369 In the period reviewed the major development has been the emergence of Valletta and the Three Cities under the Order and the tremendous urban extension in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The town-villages of medieval Malta, looking inwards to Rabat, grew quietly but were eclipsed by the youthful Valletta and remained agriculturally and socially isolated. In recent generations the economic 'draw' of the towns and the harbour area penetrated the Fringe zone and then the Rural districts, bringing all the countryside in some measure within the economic sphere of the towns. This has been accompanied by the education and emancipation of the rural community which tends to blur the line of demarcation between townsman and villager. Thus an adequate definition of 'Rural Malta' becomes increasingly elusive.

SECTION 2:· The Farmer and Farming

128

DEFINITIONS

In much the same way in which the terms 'rural community' and village' need examination before they can be used in socio-economic analysis, so too, in Malta, do the meanings of 'farmer', 'farm-holding', etc., even as used in official reports, need elucidation.

128 241 423 [114] The definitions of such terms made by Mitchell (B/525) have been accepted by the present writer. The 'farmer' is the "owner or holder of the land which he cultivates either individually or as the principal person of an agricultural enterprise". "The land worked by the farmer and his group of helpers constitutes the 'farm holding' or 'farm'. 'Holding' here implies simply the land held by the farmer, and is not used in a synonomous sense with the legalistic 'tenement'. There are excellent reasons for maintaining a clear distinction between the two terms for, on the one hand, a holding may consist of many different tenements held by the farmer of as many landowners and, on the other, a legal tenement may be occupied by more than one farmer. 311 423 Confusion may also arise, in this connection, from the fact that a holding may contain freehold as well as various types of leasehold land". Mitchell continues "Most farms include land of more than one category, and especially in the north

241 592 (a) with the labour of members of his family limited, in many cases, as far as the women and girls are concerned to casual assistance and to grudging work by his sons until they can find some paid employment away from the home farm, and

241 464 [461] [465] (b) with the high cost of non-family labour at between £1 and 30/- per eight-hour day where a member of the family would have worked from early morning until sundown. Moreover the supply of hirable labour is by no means great nor readily available and, unless a general economic collapse forces a return to the land, there are no indications of any improvement in the position. Rather is agricultural labour likely to become scarcer and more costly.

241 [461] The problem is considerably aggravated by the fact that as already suggested, the particular characteristics of Maltese farming demand an intensive application of manual labour, both in the maintainance of the more precarious fields as well as in cultivation. Something of the detail of this need emerges from a consideration of the timetable of the Maltese farmer both as regards the annual cycle of activity and the daily round of farm-work.

TIMETABLE

221 241 The timetable of the Maltese farmer is more diverse and varied than is at first apparent. It is convenient to distinguish the daily timetable proper from the annual calendar of events. Under traditional peasant farming conditions there appears to have been a much greater degree of uniformity but as farming has been 'commercialized' so has the range of variety increased.

175 178 221 241 The peasant field-tiller depended on climate, on the crop cycle and on the sun. The year's round of field-work a century ago is recorded in an 1849 "Calendario dell'Agricoltore" (B/355) which listed the major farm activities of each month along with short articles on subjects of interest to the farmer of the time. Many of these topics, such as silk, olives, aniseed, cotton, honey, almonds, and tobacco, would not merit such prominence in a modern version of the Calendario[21]. More striking still is the emergence, since 1849, of dairying and stock-rearing, which was scarcely mentioned in the Calendario but has more recently grown to first importance for a large part of the farming community. [234] [233]

178 241 Changes of such magnitude over the century can be expected to affect the routine of farm-work and of village and family life. In the mid-nineteenth century, Maltese farming was still very much more 'peasant' than 'commercial' and the change between then and now becomes clear when a

242 and information centre to which the farmer may turn for
654 advice and material help. Much discussed by the farming community in 1958 were the plans for a proposed artificial insemination centre to help in the improvement of stock in the Islands along with the provision of an efficient stud (Section 4). The early stages of the Advisory Service are outlined in B/252.

178 Thus a lot has been done and a great deal more said
241 about farming in Malta and its improvement and modification
654 to bring it more closely into line with present conditions
181 both in Malta and abroad. The farmer's characteristic conservatism has to be overcome at every stage (v. Section 4)
[234] but where he sees a clear prospect of quick profit he is not slow to move. The outstanding example of this is the guaranteed milk sale through the M.M.U. which, in the space of a few years, has produced a revolution in dairying in the Islands.

433 The herdsman is not concerned with an increasing milk
654 surplus in the Islands as a whole. While the guarantee
234 remains he will continue to put every effort into selling more gallons each day and to subordinating cash-cropping to fodder production in his fields (Cases I to IX). It is certainly keeping him in farming but it is not, apparently, having the same effect on his son.

SECTION 3 : The Farmer and Living Standards

MONEY

433 In the early nineteenth century the Maltese farmer was
434 a 'peasant' in the sense that he was engaged in small scale
178 subsistence farming with the help only of his family.
[175] Economically and socially he saw little beyond his family, farm and village. There were very few wants which could not be supplied at home, or at least within the village. In 1958 one heard of a now almost mythical Maltese countryman of a hundred years previously whose annual expenses in terms of money totalled 6d : 3d for paraffin and 3d to have his horse shod! Today, the farmer who spoke thus of his predecessor receives about £300 for the milk which he sells each year (Case I) as but one item in a present annual turnover of several hundred pounds which characterizes modern 'commercialized' agriculture in Malta where the farmer produces for sale. He still provides much of the food for his family but he is no longer a peasant.

178 Thus the place of money provides a basic distinction
436 between the present 'commercialized' position and that which
437 prevailed under traditional peasant farming. A century ago money and financial transactions in general featured only

and inertia of the traditional peasant.

STANDARD OF LIVING

178 511 [436] The past century and a half have seen the development from peasant to commercial farming, along with the adoption of money as the basis of exchange, and the appearance of a large range of new demands in diet, clothing, housing, luxuries, recreation, etc. Some observations on the living standards of the farming community during the period are now indicated.

175 511 369 178 Speaking of living standards in the Malta of the early nineteenth century Price considers that "an identity and cohesion prevailed not only in major economic trends but in the economic habits of the people" (B/556, p.8). Thus "In these circumstances it is possible to examine together the habits of rural labourers, urban labourers, artisans, small farmers and fishermen...." (B/556, p.9). Price holds that during the first half of the nineteenth century there was in fact little change in the living standards prevailing in the Maltese Islands despite the fluctuations evident within the national economy as a whole. "Years of prosperity may have brought a slight increase in the ratio of wheaten to barley bread or in the use of novel clothing such as straw hats. But, it seems clear, the chief effect of prosperity was to increase the consumption of oil, alcohol and tobacco; these, together with his religion, ranked first in the list of desirable and important things in the minds of the Maltese flush with surplus cash. Presumably these were the things he hoped society would give while his traditional diet, clothing and shelter were the things he expected society to provide" (B/556, p.9-10).

175 434 369 Among the unskilled urban and rural workers there was a notable uniformity in wages throughout the period. Price speaks of 6½d for a day's work for a man (and about 1d only for a women) but observes that skilled workers, and especially those in dockyard employ, could expect very much more (B/556, p.9-10). For the mass of the labouring and farming community therefore income was of the order of a few pence per day but, as suggested, the prevailing self-sufficiency of the near-peasant farmer of the period made actual monetary income an inadequate indicator of standards of living. For the urban worker, on the other hand, lacking the farm basis, the low wage level meant poverty and hardship. More especially "Poverty..... pressed heavily on the under-employed" (B/556, p. 11).

175 288 The importance of cotton to the nineteenth century Maltese farmer has been discussed in Section 1. In 1839

175 the Royal Commissioners reported (B/184) that "The princip
288 manufacture of the casals[28] is spinning with the spinning-wheel, or sometimes with the spindle. Second to this is the weaving of canvas, cotton and cloth used for clothing by the country people, and the necessary preparatory work, 175 such as winding, beating the cotton, etc." But the 178 industry was then much weaker than it had been two 288 generations before and as it retreated during the nineteenth century no ready replacement was forthcoming from [462] within agriculture itself. The farmer had to rely on other crops while, socially, the change affected the family as a working unit for cotton processing had been 175 largely the work of women. Even in 1839 a considerable 178 amount of blame for the prevailing low living standards 288 could be attached to the decline of cotton. The Commis- 735 sioners reported that the prevalent poverty had become 511 worse since 1814 on account of the shortage of work and that unemployment was worst of all in the rural districts, the cotton areas, where the small wages not only precluded saving but also led to begging and stealing which was "One of the worst consequences of the prevalent poverty and at the same time a most active cause of it" (B/184).

Poverty, wages, sanitation and disease gave rise to much concern and investigation in the middle decades of the nineteenth century - especially in so far as the conditions of the labouring and rural classes were concerned. The Royal Commissioners' report in 1838-9 (B/184); Midge in 1840 (B/516); the Census two years later and those made in 1851 and at ten-year intervals thereafter (B/166,167); reports on sanitary conditions in 1867 and 1874 (B/223,226); on distress in 1824 and 1867-68 (B/205,207); on mortality in 1874-75 (B/225, et seq); and on cholera in 1865 (B/224), all threw light on the poor living standards of the Maltese. However the 1874-75 report on mortality did hasten to qualify its observations with [262] "Poverty, indeed, at present, is not generally so great as it was in former times (about 40 years ago), when the bulk of the lower classes, especially in the country districts, lived constantly on barley bread of the worst description" while "It must also be admitted that the sanitary condition of these Islands, generally, is not so bad as that of other countries, and that, of late years, it has improved..." (B/225, p.7).

175 The basic conclusion to emerge from this evidence
511 is that there existed a considerable gulf in general
[369] living standards between the people of the towns and
[464] those of the country. There was also an important
[458] contrast within the then rapidly expanding [illegible] area,

175 458 511 [468] [184] between the unskilled labourer and the skilled. This dichotomy was a regular feature during the nineteenth century, as in the twentieth, and is to be distinguished from the rise and fall of prosperity and depression which characterized the totality of economic life in Malta. Malta was highly susceptible to events in the Mediterranean basin and in Europe as a whole and was much affected by changes in trading patterns and in strategy, so that the fortunes of the Maltese fluctuated with the alternation of prosperity and depression during the nineteenth century. [731] The sequence of wars, trade booms and slumps, droughts, epidemics and other events which affected the Mediterranean in general was particularly strongly felt in vulnerable Malta (B/556).

175 184 511 178 The major economic developments arising from the growth of the dockyard and the consolidation of the Islands' role have been outlined in Section 1. The various stages in this expansion were reflected in the economic life and the living standards of the Maltese just as the chain of external events made their presence felt. In all this the fortunes of one section of the population, such as the farming community, could at no time stand unaffected by fluctuations within the economy of the Islands as a whole.

175 178 [184] [871] Malta remained sharply divided within itself by class, district and education and the parallel differences of living standards between one section of society and another were continued. But the later decades of the nineteenth century saw, on the social as distinct from the economic plane, the beginnings of general education which, during the present century, was to remove the illiteracy which had for so long prevented the rural classes in Malta and Gozo from having any experience of life and society outside the limits of the village. [184] [369] Improvements in transport and communication within the Islands and the spread of amenities from the Urban area to the villages in the later nineteenth and in the twentieth centuries further tended to remove the veil of isolation which had shrouded the villages of Malta and Gozo and kept them cut off from the social and cultural [621] changes of the towns. Traditionally, each village had been a closely-knit unit under a Parish priest, having little contact with Valletta and perhaps less with the villages in other parts of the Islands (Section 1).

In the later decades of the nineteenth century the forces indicated were beginning to modify the position but it was not until the present century and particularly

178 [175] the years after 1939 that the cumulative effects of education, emancipation and communication were to produce a society very different from that which Maltese country [511] [184] folk had known for centuries (Section 1). It became different when the traditionally depressed sections of the community became restless and began to demand the improvements in their living standards which they came to believe should be theirs by right as well as need.

178 184 369 This is not to suggest that the present position of Maltese rural society is an 'end-product' of change. The opposite is true. The old and new exist side by side in agriculture and in the farming community of the Islands today. Some people, some places, and some features of life and work hold far more tenaciously to the old than do others where comparatively few years have seen considerable modifications of the traditional pattern.

175 458 464 511 By 1912, the Royal Commissioners were able to observe that the living standards of the labouring classes of Malta and Gozo compared well with those of other Mediterranean countries (B/186, p.25-6). "Building", they said, "is cheap and good and the country people are exceptionally well-housed". But, in their consideration of the economic state of the Islands as a whole, the Commissioners thought the picture much more gloomy. The depression which they found, though of only recent appearance, was being felt by the mass of the people, although "until the advent of the present depression, the condition of the people has been one of comparative comfort". To appreciate "The present distress, and the greatly extended unemployment of the working people of Malta.....it is necessary to recognise the entirely artificial nature of their former prosperity and employments, which depended to a large extent upon Imperial expenditure...." (B/186, p.12). Here did the Commissioners strike at the root of the problem which has grown to formidable proportions in the half-century since the report was made. They pointed to the position in which the economic structure of the country as a whole was based on the shifting sands of Imperial naval and military expenditure and in which the living standards of the Maltese population were therefore tied indirectly and directly to that Imperial expenditure. Moreover, within the Maltese population itself, it is not difficult to see that the first to be hit by a drop in Imperial expenditure (as happened between 1902 and 1911 and, again, in the post-1945 period) were and are the labouring and poorer classes generally lacking alternative employment in the Islands, in the event of their becoming redundant, and having often little or no capital reserves.

175 Here the agricultural labourer has been in a much stronger
258 position than the townsman for he has had the land to which
264 he could return when no other work was available. Thus the
269 degree of emphasis on the land within the past hundred years is seen to have varied inversely as the general level of prosperity in the Islands (Section 2).

178 The recent growth of part-time farming in Malta may be
241 related to an attempt by the countryman to benefit from the
464 higher wages and status attached to non-agricultural
458 pursuits and yet at the same time to maintain the foothold
554 on the land as if he were contemplating retreat thither in some future period of major economic recession and depression in the Islands. The difficulty here however is that Maltese farming as it is cannot support more than a minor part of the total population. As an economic retreat it therefore has severe limitations: but the
554 problem goes further. The present younger generation in the farming community, in its anxiety to free itself from the stigma and status of farming and village life, is cutting as many ties with the land as it can - and as quickly. Therefore the foothold in farming, even for the few who might rely on it in time of distress, is weakening. The estrangement threatens to become too complete to allow of reconciliation.

175 Something of the change in twentieth century Maltese
465 agriculture may be seen from that afore-mentioned index, the wage rate. Without attempting a full analysis which would necessitate a consideration of the changing wage structure within the total employed sector of the population, an indication of average wage-rates for sample years available illustrates the steady level in the nineteenth century followed by a gradual increase in the first decades of the present century, and, after the 1939-45 War, a rocketing in the generally accepted level of the agricultural wage. It may also be observed that the agricultural wage, while generally lower than the average labouring remuneration during the nineteenth century is, today, equal to or even more than the general labourer's wage - an indication of the prevailing supply and demand of agricultural labour.

Daily wage of male agricultural labourer:

1826-42	6½d - 8d	(B/556, p.215)
1843-54	8d - 10d	"
1855-56	1s - 1/6d	"
1857-65	1/3d - 2/6d	"
1866-85	10d - 3/6d	"
1907-08	1s - 2/4d	(B/165 - 1907-08)
1921	3s	(B/165 - 1921)
1936	3s - 3/6d	(B/165 - 1936)
1957-58	20s - 25s	(Personal Investigation)

175 722 511 454 During the war years the farmer had been able to strengthen his financial position to an unprecendented extent. The high prices which he could command left him with a large reserve upon which to draw during the decade after 1945. Today these reserves are dwindling and disappearing. In part they have been put towards capital improvements on the farm - notably the acquisition of cows and machinery (Section 2), and in part they have been spent [369] on routine home and family maintainance. The farmer in post-War Malta and Gozo has been struggling to live up to 'Urban' standards, to many of which he was introduced as a [426] result of the War. He has, in many cases, been living above his means to the extent of being perpetually in debt. He has somehow failed to adapt himself to his new position and still looks back nostaligically, at least from the financial point of view, to his commanding position during the siege.

434 511 171 [369] Today the farmer's standard of living compares unfavourably with that of the Urban working classes but is notably higher than that of other farming communities in nearby Mediterranean countries. In rural Greece, for example, annual earnings frequently do not exceed £25, although the average per capita income for the whole country is over £60[29]. Yet prices for simple clothing and other essential items are often quite exorbitant, especially for the impoverished Greek farmer. A 1954 survey of seventy Libyan farms in the Zawia area of northern Tripolitania found an average 'farm earnings' of £136 per annum[30], but the present rate for casual farm labour in the area is some 5/- per day only (about £75 per annum) and even less in more rural districts[31].

Thus in Libya a field-labourer may expect to earn little more than half the income of a land-holding farmer. [434] In Malta, however, the situation appears reversed, and the labourer without field commitments of his own can demand his 25/- for an eight-hour day and emerge, in many cases, markedly better off than the farmer who hired him and who stands the loss on unsold, unprofitable or damaged crops.

511 434 Within his own country the Maltese farmer has, on average, a standard of life still slightly below the general level, although the disparity is by no means as great as it was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Above-average exceptions include those farmers who have been able to profit from the present regime of guaranteed milk sales by building up a large herd, or those who can still draw upon war-time savings or other accumulated reserves.

735 434 The C.A.R.E.[27] assessment of poverty made for the purpose of free food distributions to poor and needy

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6:Beeley K-5 (1937-1938) 1939 EZ6 Malta EZ6

SECTION 7 : Bibliography

113 Published and documentary material relating to the Maltese Islands falls clearly into two categories:

(a) that concerning the Order of Knights of St. John of Jerusalem,

(b) that relating to the Islands themselves and to the Maltese people.

113 175 The two and a half centuries during which the Order had its headquarters in Malta (1530-1798) included the climacteric of its naval power in the Mediterranean struggle with Islam, and the greatest development of its sovereign position among the states of Europe. Historians continue to find, in these years, an apparently limitless field of research and the flow of published results of new or 'second-hand' work shows no signs of abating. This is not to say that the four centuries of the Order before 1530 and the years since 1798 have been overlooked but it underlines the importance of the period of rule in the Maltese Islands, to Europe as well as to the Order itself. The fact that the members of the Order came to be known as 'Knights of Malta' is a further indication of their association with the Islands.

By the good fortune of history many of the archives and original manuscript material of the Order, from its foundation to its expulsion from Malta by the French in 1798, are still preserved in the Royal Malta Library (B/16) or in smaller collections elsewhere. The Royal Malta Library with its large and partly unclassified collection remains a veritable mine of information to students of the Order and of the Islands which they ruled so tightly (B/26).

Since ancient times the Maltese Islands have received attention from foreign writers. In the eighteenth century the volume of this interest increased immensely. Itinerant gentlemen of leisure from Britain and the Continent wrote home their observations and produced 'accounts' and 'descriptions' of the Islands. This recording of "interesting facts" (B/19, p.xv) continued into the nineteenth century but broadened with the appearance of several large-scale works, the results of painstaking investigations (B/326, 455, 516, etc.).

The 159 years of British rule have seen the growth of the local Government Printing Office (now a section of the Department of Information) and the appearance of an increasing number of reports and papers, singly and in series. To these have been added the H.M.S.O. and other official items emanating from the United Kingdom. In recent years these sources have expanded rapidly in scope and volume as the policies and problems of the Islands have called for more observation, documentation and record.

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195 The War of 1939-45 gave rise to a crop of literature in Italy, Britain and other countries with solitary Malta as the object of both propaganda and admiration.

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178 As to language, it is clear the War finally killed the greater part of the pro-Italian feeling in Malta and confirmed English as the first foreign tongue of the people. It had been a language of government for more than a century but had not replaced Italian in education or at law until the inter-War period. Italian had grown to first place under the Order and had maintained its position during British nineteenth century rule except in Government and commerce.

Maltese itself, meanwhile, had not escaped from its traditional rôle as 'kitchen-tongue' and, in fact, did not replace Italian as one of the two official languages of Malta until as late as 1934. Thereby Maltese achieved, for the first time, respectability in Malta. There has since been a considerable increase in the number of books and periodicals appearing in the language, along with general education and spread of literacy among a monoglot Maltese public. Over the same period the use of Italian has declined relatively (even in its traditional strongholds, the Church and the professional classes) and the demand for English has accelerated. In fact, for a small section of the urban population of Malta, English is now the mother-tongue and Maltese the second language. An illustration of [204] the changed linguistic picture is afforded by the following classification of daily newspapers in Malta by language for 1888 ("Il Compagno per Tutti", 1888), 1920 (B/94 - 1920, p.333), 1933-34 (B/94 - 1933-34, p.409), and 1959 (B/97 - 1959, p.99).

	1888	1920	1933-34	1959
English	1	1	2	2
Italian	3	2	2	-
English and Italian	-	-	1	-
Maltese	-	-	2	2

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[212] Since Maltese has approached respectability as a literary language in its own country for only a quarter-century Maltese themselves have usually written in either Italian, as formerly, or in English, as is the case today. But, apart from this, it is clear that a Maltese language publication cannot expect to find a market outside the Islands nor among the significant section of the population, generally the professional and business classes, speaking English and Italian as well as Maltese but proud of their ability to read and write only one or both of the foreign languages and not their mother-tongue.

Maltese language publications today therefore tend solely to deal with Maltese matters and a public within Malta which lacks fluency in written English. Maltese language dictionaries and works of a philological or etymological nature are obvious exceptions to this - especially since the linguistic

6:Beeley K-5 (1957-1958) 1959 EZ6 Malta EZ6

APPENDIX 2 B : The Malta Dockyard - Dates of major Extensions prior to 1910.

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Admiralty House, Vittoriosa	Probably built	1670-1680
Superintendent Victualling Yard House	" "	1730
Captain Attendant's House	Built	1730
Admiralty House, Valletta	Re-built	1761-1765
Deputy Surgeon General's House, Bighi	Altered	1832
Officers' Residences	"	1832
Deputy Surgeon General's Office	Built	1832
Sea Baths, Bighi	"	1832 (extended in 1871, 1877, 1879 and 1886)
Dockyard in Galley Creek	Mainly built	1840-1850
Corradino Tank, No. 1	Built	1841
Naval Bakery	"	1844
Clock Tower	"	1844
Canine Tunnel	"	1845
Dockyard Terrace, Senglea	"	1848
No. 1 Dock (Outer)	"	1847
Bakery Tanks	"	1847-1848
Officers' Mess, Sheer Bastion	Altered	1848
Buildings round No. 1 Dock	Built	1848
Admiralty Bridge (Margherita)	"	1848
Master Miller, Baker Engineer's House	"	1848
Police Quarters	"	1848
(Late) Torpedo Store	"	1848
Main Gate	"	1849
Wharf by Sheer Bastion and Main Gate	"	1850
Foreman's Residence	"	1851
St. Helena Tank	"	1852
Slip in front of Margherita Arches	"	1852
St. Teresa Tunnel	"	1855
St. Lorenzo Tunnel	"	1858
Corradino Tank No.2	"	1861
No.1 Dock (Inner)	"	1862
Officers' Mess, Bighi	"	1863
Short Tunnel from Dockyard to French Creek	"	1865
Church Tunnel " " " " "	"	1866
Horse Coal Stores, various	"	1869
No.3 Dock (Somerset)	"	1871
Hydraulic Dock	"	1871
Dockyard Chapel, over Tunnel	"	1882
Pumping House, No. 3 Dock	"	1884
Torpedo Depot, Bighia	"	1884
North Gate	"	1892
No. 2 Dock (Hamilton)	"	1892
South Gate	Re-built	1894
Scheme for increased accommodation for H.M. Ships	Approved	1901
Works Department Office	Built	1901
New Docks	"	1906
Burmola Gate	"	1906
Ghajn Dwieli Gate	Re-built	1906
Corradino Gate	Built	1907
Ricasoli Breakwater	"	1907
St. Elmo Breakwater	"	1908

NOTE Information from D/468, Appendix XI.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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796 church in Str. Mezzodì, at the back of
825 the Royal Opera House, where a priest standing at the door of the little church, sprinkles the animals with holy water as they pass by.

The same ceremony takes place annually at Notabile, where the animals are blessed by an Augustinian friar, at the door of St. Augustine Church. Here the quadrupeds partake of some barley which is placed in a tray for them.

796 In the time of the Order of St. John
825 of Jerusalem, the ceremony of blessing
•195 the quadrupeds on St. Anthony's day was more imposing than it is in our days.

The first that took part in the procession, were the horses drawing the Grand Master's stately carriage, followed by every description of vehicle,

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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from the gala coach of the dignitaries of the Island to the peasant's cart.

Very many inquiries have been made into the origin of the blessing of quadrupeds on this festival, none of which, however, has proved satisfactory.

That St. Anthony has been long recognized as the patron and protector of the lower animals, and particularly of pigs, is a well established fact.

Fuller, in his "Worthies." says: "St. Anthony is universally known as the patron of hogs, having in all pictures a pig for his attendant, though for what reason is unknown, except because being a hermit, and having a cell or hole digged in the earth, and feeding principally on roots, he and the hogs were both alike in their diet and lodgings."

When St. Anthony was living in the

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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This festival is said to have originated with the ancient Romans who, on the night of the 1st day of February, went about the streets of Rome with lighted torches and candles in honour of the Goddess *Februa*, the mother of Mars.

In the year 684, however, pope Sergius, anxious to wean his disciples from the practice of heathen observances, and seeing that it would be useless to prohibit a practice of so long standing, turned the ceremony to a christian account by enjoining a similar offer of candles to the Blessed Virgin, and ordained that all Christian people should come to church on the 2nd day of February with candles in honour of the Virgin Mother of God.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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CARNIVAL

541 Among the several sources of popular amusements in Malta, the Carnival no doubt ranks first.

When the Carnival is about to make its usual visit, the dancing season, dinner parties and amusing entertainments begin.

541 This amusement, which affords a harm-
•175 less outlet for the spirit of merry-making, was introduced in Malta during the Grandmastership of Peter Del Ponte in the year 1535. (*)

(*) Grand Master Lascaris, at the request, it is supposed, of some Jesuit fathers, gave orders in 1639 that no woman was to be allowed to mask herself, or to assist at any dramatic entertainment, on the 3 days of Carnival under penalty of being whipped. This order gave rise to serious disturbances and the Grand Master deemed it prudent not to interfere again.

Sir Patrick Stuart, Governor of Malta, determined in 1846 to reduce the Carnival by one day, not allowing any masqueraders on Sunday, the first day. This, however, led to a collision between the police and the people. The Governor, seeing that serious consequences would follow, let things take their usual course.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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541 evolutions before the doors of the wealthy, to whom the little girl, who is called "Il gharusa tal parata" (the bride), is taken after the performance to receive some money as a remuneration for the trouble taken by the men, who employ the money they collect in defraying the expenses of the band, and the buying or hiring of the costumes they wear. (*)

541 •175 648 The parata is a commemoration of the famous victory which the Maltese gained over the Musulmans in 1565.

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[171] (*) In Dr. Chandler's "Travels in Greece" page 133, we read the following passage which bears great resemblance to our "Parata":

"Some Arabian and black slaves who had obtained their freedom and were settled at Athens had a feast on the performance of the rite of circumcision. The women danced in a ring with sticks in their hands, and turning in pairs, clashed them over their heads at intervals, singing wildly to the music."

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

796 These fires are sometimes kept up
372 for hours, being continually fed by the scores of by-standers who take great delight in throwing amidst the flames some old rickety piece of furniture which they consider as lumber in their houses. Lots of happy and reckless children, and very often men, are seen merrily leaping in succession over and through the crackling flames (*).

796 At the time of the Order of St.
372 John of Jerusalem, the Grand Master
•175

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[194] (*) Leaping over the fires is mentioned among the superstitious rites used at the *Palilia* feasts, instituted in honour of *Pales* the goddess of shepherds, (in the calends of May) in Ovidius's Fasti.

" Moxque per ardentes stipulae crepitantis acervos
Traijcias celeri strenua membra pede "

The learned Moresin appears to have been of opinion that the custom of leaping over these fires is a vestige of the ordeal, where to be able to pass through fires with safety, was held to be an indication of innocence.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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himself, soon after the *Angelus* used to leave his palace, accompanied by the Grand Prior, the Bishop, and two bailiffs, to set fire to some pitch barrels which were placed for the occasion in the square facing the sacred Hospital. 796 372 175

Great crowds used to assemble here in order to assist at this ceremony. The setting ablaze of the five casks, and later on, of the 8 casks, (*), by the Grand Master, was a signal for the others to kindle their fires in the different parts of the town.

Various opinions are entertained by antiquarian writers with regard to the origin of these fires on St. John's eve. 796 372 171 174

From the account given by Jakob Grimm in his "Deutsche Mythologie" p. p. 583, 593, it would appear that

(*) Eight being the languages of the Order.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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silk and lama cloth of gold, are distributed, all the crowds disperse and the victorious champions, loaded with honours and caresses, and covered with garlands of flowers and ribbons, are conducted in triumph through the streets of the town amidst the deafening cheers and acclamations of the populace. 527 547

These races were instituted in 1593 during the reign of Grand Master Verdala, as popular rejoicings after that the plague, which was introduced in Malta through the carelessness of some of the authorities, had played great havoc for eighteen months amongst the inhabitants of the Island. 527 547 175 [731]

From this race all the other races which are held on different occasions during the year, both in Malta and in Gozo, owe their origin.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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527 These races were first held on St.
541 Roque's Feast day in consequence of
776 the working of miraculous cures of
755 the plague by St. Roque who was
796 specially invoked by persons afflicted,
195 while stricken himself with the desease, at Piacenza, in Italy.

THE "VITTORIA"

527 ***Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary***

[796] The 8th. of September, the day dedicated to the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is no doubt the grandest and the most popular day for the people of these Islands.

Both the streets and church of Senglea—the town in which the feast is celebrated—present on this occasion a most lively appearance.

[784] The grand illumination and the

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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beautiful display of fireworks, on the eve of the festival, attract thousands of spectators not only from the towns and villages of Malta but also from the sister Island.

Hundreds of Gozitans flock to Malta in order, as it were, to take part in the general rejoicings held on this special day of the anniversary of the raising of the great siege of Malta, which ended in the total repulse of the Turks, after a most heroic defence by the Knights of St. John, united to the bravery of the Maltese, under the intrepid Grand Master Jean La Valette, in 1565.

In the afternoon of the feast (8th Sept.) the grand harbour presents indeed a very lively appearance, there being boat racing and the *giostra* or greasy pole, the prizes for which are given

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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184 memoration of the Victory won by the
527 Maltese in the great siege of 1565,
533 instead of coming to take part in the amusements held in Valletta and in the other towns, meet in groups on the terraces, or flat tops of their houses, and keep singing merrily till very late at night.

ANOTHER NATIONAL FEAST

527 The celebration of the glorious vic-
186 tory won by the Maltese over the Turks in 1565 has been of good use to the Maltese, It has enabled them to comprehend more keenly the historic value of this Island.

[175 In fact, some two years ago another
648] national commemoration has originated at Città Vecchia, on the 3rd or 4th Sunday of September, to celebrate the

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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liberation of the Maltese from the yoke of the Saracens by Count Roger of Normandy in the year 1090.

A liberal programme is now annually arranged by the Committee embracing every kind of attraction at Notabile.

PILGRIMAGES TO MELLEHA (*)

On the last two Sundays of September, every year, the roads leading to Melleha are alive with merry parties, especially country people, on their way to that village, in order to visit the

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(*) Melleha is a village some 10½ miles distant from Valletta, and about an hour's ride from St. Paul's Bay. It is renowned for the very old, perhaps the oldest, Sanctuary in the world, dedicated to the B. Virgin. This Sanctuary was founded by St. Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, while he was in Malta (58 A. D.) for the convenience of the faithful who lived in those neighbourhoods. Over the small altar is a picture of St. Mary, covering another old drawing of the same, executed by St. Luke.

7: Busuttil 1, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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The custom of strewing garlands of flowers upon the graves of the departed is derived from the ancients who used to crown the deceased with flowers in token of the shortness of life. (*) It appears also from "Pliny's Natural History," from "Cicero's Oration on Lucius Plancus" and from "Virgil's sixth Æneid," that the strewing of flowers on the graves was a funeral rite among the heathens—St. Ambrose, however, in his funeral oration on the death of Valentinian, has these words: "I will not sprinkle his grave with flowers but pour on his spirit the odour of Christ. Let others pour baskets of flowers—Christ is our lily and with this will I consecrate his relics." (†)

(*) Gough, in the introduction to his second volume of Sepulchral munuments, page 5.

(†) Brand's Popular Antiquities.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

riana. (*). Here the fleshless skeletons of the monks who died in the convent are dressed up in the robes which they wore during life, and arranged erect in niches along the wall.

St. Odilo, abbot of Cluny, in 998 instituted the "Commemoration of all the faithful departed" in all the monasteries of his Congregation, on the 1st of November, which was soon adopted by the whole western Church. The Council of Oxford in 1222, declared it a holiday of the second class, on which certain necessary and important kinds of work were allowed (†). In Malta however the 2nd of November is only a day of devotion.

(*) The opening of this vault for the public on All Soul's day has been stopped for some years past to prevent some accidents through overcrowding. Visitors, however, are allowed in at any time of the year by applying for permission to the Father Superior.

(†) BUTLER, "Life of Saints."

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

MAY DAY

175 529 824 Historians mention that there was a time in Malta, during the Government of the Knights of St. John, when it was customary on the 1st of May to deck the Grand Master's palace balcony, and the doors of those who were invested with the Grand Cross, with branches [174] of trees. It appears that this sign of a holiday, which was introduced in Malta by the families from the island of Rhodes, was a remnant of the worship of the sun, formerly adored by the Rhodians.

171 529 824 Bourne cites Polydor Virgil, as telling us that among the Italians the youth of both sexes were accustomed to go into the fields in the Calends of May, and bring thence branches of trees, singing all the way as they came, and to place them on the doors of their

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

houses. This, he observes, is a relic of an ancient custom among the Heathens, who observed the last 4 days of April, and the 1st day of May in honour of the goddess *Flora* who was imagined to be the deity presiding over the fruits and flowers.

171 527 824

THE CUCCANJA

This is an entertainment which was formerly given by the Grand Master to the Maltese on Shrove Tuesday, the last day of the Carnival.

175 527

Long beams were fixed against the guard house opposite the palace, and between each of the beams, rope-ladders were fastened, the whole being covered over with branches of trees in leaf, to which were tied, from top to bottom, live animals, baskets full of eggs, hams, sausages, and all kinds of provisions.

527 526 175

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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529 This wooden edifice was crowned by
526 a globe, made up of hoops and covered
•175 over with linen cloth, on which stood the figure of *Fame* holding a flag with the Grand Master's arms. Crowds of people assembled on the spacious square, and at a given signal commence to attack the *Cuccanja*, and the provisions became the property of those who, having seized them, were able to carry them off in safety through the crowd.

This lively proceeding was the cause of furious disturbances—the possessors of the various prizes having a rather rough time of it, before being allowed to retire with what they captured.

To the first enterprising individual who reached the figure of *Fame* was allotted some pecuniary remuneration which was well earned, considering the struggle he had gone through to attain

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

his object, and on the standard being taken to be returned to the Grand Master, the cloth covered globe burst open and out came a flight of pigeons. 527 526 175

The Maltese never allowed either foreigners or soldiers to share the profits of the *cuccanja*.

This entertainment which has been suppressed since the reign of the Grand Master De Rohan (1775-1797) was a a source of great delight to the Maltese people. [656]

BOWLS

A game of bowls is a favourite pastime in Malta. 562

The players arrange themselves in sides of three or four each, and each man is usually provided with three bowls, which he marks differently for distinction.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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443 St. Anna, which are celebrated on the
527 24th, 25th, and 26th of July. These
[796] fairs, however, which were once very
[798] popular, have now sunk into insignificance and most likely will before long entirely disappear.

443 Fairs have long been regularly held
191 in most parts of Europe and Asia, and they appear to have originated in the Church festivals, which were found to afford convenient opportunities for commercial transactions. The concourse of people being then so such greater than on other occasions.

USAGES

•195 The ancient Maltese formerly kept
562 their wives in the strictest retirement. They held the opinion that women should never appear but twice in public,

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
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the day they were married and when they were buried. They were therefore always employed within doors, and never went out, except at a very early hour to church, when they were entirely covered by a long mantle. This costume came originally from Sicily, and reached from the head to the feet, the forehead and eyes alone being visible. The upper part of the mantle, covering the head, was cut in a different manner for unmarried women—these wearing it shaped round, while married women wore it pointed.

WEDDINGS

Marriages in Malta were always entirely arranged by the parents; who for the greater part consulted only their own interest, and the suitable-

8:Brockman T-5 (no date) 1938
EZ6 Malta EZ6

continually fed by the scores of by-standers who take great delight in throwing amidst the flames some old rickety piece of furniture which they consider as lumber in their houses. Lots of happy and reckless children, and very often men, are seen merrily leaping in succession over and through the crackling flames."[1]

At the time of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, the Grand Master himself, soon after the *Angelus*, used to leave his palace, accompanied by the Grand Prior, the Bishop and two bailiffs, to set fire to some pitch barrels which were placed for the occasion in the square facing the sacred hospital.

Great crowds used to assemble here in order to assist at this ceremony. The setting ablaze of the five casks, and later on, of the eight casks,[2] by the Grand Master, was a signal for the others to kindle their fires in the different parts of the town.

Various opinions are entertained by antiquarian writers with regard to the origin of these fires on St. John's Eve.

From the account given by Jacob Grimm in his *Deutsche Mythologie*, pp. 583, 593, it would appear that the great blaze reserved for the eve of the feast of the nativity of St. John the Baptist on June 23rd is observed with similar rites in every country of Europe.

The kindling of the fire, the leaping over or through the flames clearly show that these rites are essentially of

[1] Leaping over the fires is mentioned among the superstitious rites at the Palilia feasts, instituted in honour of *Pales*, the goddess of shepherds (in the calends of May) in Ovid's Fasti.

"Moxque per ardentes stipulae crepitantis acervos
traijcias celeri strenua membra pede."

The learned Moresin appears to have been of opinion that the custom of leaping over these fires is a vestige of the ordeal, where to be able to pass through fires with safety, was held to be an indication of innocence.

[2] Eight being the languages of the Order.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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CHAPTER II

Where and What is Malta?

133 SEVENTEEN MILES IN LENGTH AND NINE MILES ACROSS AT ITS widest, with its long axis running north-west and south-east, Malta is the principal island of one of the smallest archipelagoes in the world, a survival from those remote days when continents were differently shaped and the Mediterranean was a cluster of fresh-water lakes, divided by land bridges that connected Europe with Africa. Of one of these bridges the Maltese archipelago is to-day the sole existing pier, the one remaining fragment of a causeway along which prehistoric pachyderms and ruminants groped their puzzled way to the African warmth when driven from Europe by its increasing glaciation. Some of these mighty beasts lingered too long on the Maltese pier, and the cave of Ghar Dalam, "the Cave of Darkness," near Bir Zebbuġa at the southern extremity of the island, is a storehouse of their remains, converted in the course of ages into layers of fossil deposits as important as any of their kind in the world.

648 175 [133] This position midway between two continents has at times created doubts in the minds of scientists no less than of administrators as to the one to which Malta should properly belong, just as doubts have been expressed whether Cyprus should be held to belong to Europe or to Asia. These doubts were set at rest, from the legal point of view at all events, soon after the British Occupation. For in 1801 the Parliament of the United Kingdom gravely enacted, in clause 3 of 41 Geo. III cap. 103—or, to give the law its full title, "An Act to empower His Majesty to regulate the trade and commerce to and from the isle of Malta until the signing of a definitive Treaty of Peace, and from thence until six weeks

[Text continues on p. 18]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

after the next meeting of Parliament; and to declare the isle of Malta to be part of Europe"—

> that the said Island of Malta and dependencies thereof shall be deemed, taken and construed to be part of Europe for all purposes, and as to all matters and things whatever; any law or laws, usage or custom, or act or acts, to the contrary thereof notwithstanding.

But this enactment, although it satisfied the administrators, did not wholly silence the men of science, who produced, in addition to Europe and Africa, yet a third continental claimant to the geographical ownership of the Maltese Islands. In the middle of the nineteenth century a Maltese architect and engineer named Grognet de Vassé, best known as the designer of the great Parish Church of Mosta, propounded the theory that the submerged continent of Atlantis lay between Cyrenaica in the east and Tunis in the west, almost filling the indentations in the coast of North Africa which the Romans called Syrtes Major and Syrtes Minor and we know to-day as the Gulfs of Sidra and Gabes. Of this continent, said Grognet, the Maltese archipelago formed the north-western corner; and he published a learned treatise in support of his theory, which he based on ample references to mythology, etymology and classical geography.

It is an ingenious piece of imaginative reasoning whereby the author places the Elysian Fields and the lower world of the ancients in Atlantis, the mouths of the rivers Acheron and Phlegethon in that part of Atlantis which is Malta—namely, in the Grand Harbour and the harbour of Marsa Mxett—and an outlet of the river Styx in one of the springs of the gardens of the Villa Frere, for many years the beautiful residence and garden in Pietà of the distinguished scholar, man of letters, diplomatist and friend of Sir Walter Scott, the Right Honourable John Hookham Frere.

Nevertheless the legislators of 1801 were rightly inspired, for in climate and vegetation no less than in the works of

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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man Malta is essentially European, a projection of Europe into the south. Its vegetation is of the Mediterranean type, similar to that of Southern Spain, the Riviera, Sicily and the islands of the Ægean although, strangely enough, it lacks among its wild flowers the cyclamen which so delightfully and characteristically, in springtime, carpets the ground in Cyprus and the Isles of Greece. Here and there, it is true, there rises above its pines and cypresses and carob-trees an occasional stately date-palm, suggesting a garden-escape from the groves of Tunis. And Tunis, whence come the best dates in the world, lies, be it noted, to the north of Malta. But the fruit on the date-palms of Malta practically never ripens. Malta is too European for that.

2

If anything shaped as differently from a circle as the Mediterranean can be said to have a centre, that centre is Malta. The Maltese archipelago is equidistant from the Mediterranean's western and eastern extremities; it is its half-way house between Occident and Orient, historically no less than geographically; it has been its nerve-centre—and more than its nerve-centre, its magnet—from the "time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." All the people of the Middle Sea have possessed, influenced or coveted Malta at one time or another, the first to do so of whom we have definite knowledge being a small seafaring, trading and colonizing tribe from its easternmost shores. "The twin islands of Melita and Gaulos," wrote Professor Freeman, "lay immediately in the way of Phœnician adventurers" and became, and remained for centuries, a Phœnician settlement. It was the all-absorbing power of Rome that first brought them into the European fold.

As the nerve-centre, as the magnet, of the Mediterranean Malta was all but snatched back from the European fold when the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent sought

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

desperately to drive out the Knights of S. John as over forty years previously he had driven them out of Rhodes. But he was now concerned with a wider issue than that of blunting once more that spearhead of the Church militant: he had grasped the point that Malta as his advanced naval base would make him the master of the entire Mediterranean. Even more fully, and for a short time successfully, was the point grasped by Bonaparte, who saw in Malta not only the naval base indispensable to the command of the Mediterranean but a vital link in the route to a farther East than Phœnician or Roman had known. Thereafter neither William II nor the Axis dictators had anything fresh to learn on the subject. Malta's strategic rôle had become a postulate.

3

At the beginning of 1959 the Maltese archipelago had an estimated population, formidable for its size, of 323,629 souls (exclusive of the personnel of the armed Services), to which Gozo contributed 27,846 and little Comino 30. That is to say that it contains close on 2700 people to the square mile, which makes it one of the most densely populated geographical units in the world. The figure would have been higher but for considerable post-war emigration to Australia and elsewhere. But if, even so, it is high when measured by the area of 121 square miles[1] on which it has to live, it is small for a separate nation. For the Maltese are a nation unto themselves, with their own language, their own traditions, their own physical characteristics and a history that is one of the longest to which any existing people can lay claim.

For some reason hitherto unexplained it was in Malta and Gozo that the art of building in remote Stone Age days reached a development of skill and refinement unknown in other centres of the megalithic and neolithic worlds. Malta was already, therefore, an ancient centre of civilization when

[1] *I.e.*, about five-sixths of the area of the Isle of Wight.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

the "tempestuous wind called Euroclydon" that still whistles across it during the winter months under its modern name of *gregale*, the "Greek wind," drove S. Paul on to its shores and brought it about that the "chief man" of the island, Publius, became its first Bishop. It was a centre of civilization, as well as a centre of the religious life of the Western Mediterranean, very much earlier, for Malta, in the words of the lamented Sir Themistocles Zammit, "was the holy island of neolithic faith, the half-way house of the early mariners, who trusted themselves to their frail wooden craft, full of hope in a protecting power."

Later, when we emerge from prehistory, we find the position reversed: Malta, instead of extending supernatural protection to peoples beyond its shores, comes under the political protection of others. During the many centuries of its recorded history Malta has had many rulers: the Phœnicians and their offspring, the Carthaginians, then Romans, Arabs, Normans, Angevins, Aragonese and Castilians, then for two and a half centuries the international Order of S. John of Jerusalem, and, finally, at the invitation of the Maltese people after a brief French occupation, the British. But despite the impact of such cosmopolitan influences this people has clung tenaciously to its ancient tongue, which is unquestionably of Semitic structure and has claims to descent from the speech of Dido and Hannibal.[1] It was, in fact, from a bilingual inscription in Phœnician and Greek found in Malta in 1697, of which more will be said in the following chapter, that the Phœnician alphabet was reconstructed. Of this inscription Dr A. V. Laferla writes in his *Story of Man in Malta*: "The construction and grammar . . . are identical with those of modern Maltese and many of the words (*lil*, *bin*, *tnejn*, *jisma*, *iberikom*) are still in use at the present day." S. Luke in the Acts describes the Maltese as "barbarians"—that is, as neither Greeks nor Romans—and

[1] The name Hannibal is still met with in Malta as a Christian name. Its Maltese diminutive is Nibblu.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

we may safely assume that S. Paul's Aramaic was as comprehensible to them as was their related Phœnician to him.

There seems to be no evidence that this Semitic speech of the Maltese "barbarians" had been replaced by some other language when the Arabs seized the Maltese islands in 870. Many of the philologists therefore hold that on to this Punic stock the Arabs grafted, during the two hundred and twenty years of their occupation, a vocabulary of contemporary Arabic which did not completely oust words of the older, kindred stratum. These scholars consider that the dialect received, in fact, a second, fresher infusion from the same reservoir and that the resulting blend is the core of the Maltese language of to-day.

Inevitably, in the course of ages, this language has borrowed words from the languages and dialects of the other countries with which Malta has been connected—from Sicilian, from Aragonese, from Italian, from French, even from English—but it has always fitted such words into its own Semitic framework, has governed them according to the rules of its own Semitic grammar and mechanics. Thus the Maltese who have emigrated to Syria and to the north coast of Africa have no difficulty in making themselves understood by their Arabic-speaking neighbours, who for their part can make themselves readily understood in Malta. Here is the Lord's Prayer in Maltese, which I quote so that the reader unfamiliar with the language may see for himself what it looks like:

Missierna li inti fis-smewwiet,
Jitqaddes ismek,
Tigi saltnatek,
Ikun li trid Int, kif fis-sema hekda fl-art.

Hobzna ta' kull jum aghtina l-lum,
Ahfrilna dnubietna, bhalma nahfru lil min hu hati ghalina.
U la ddahhalniex fit-tigrib,
Izda ehlisna mid-deni. Hekk ikun.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

he cares to attend the Cathedral of Mdina, the island's earliest capital, on the 4th November, he will hear a Mass said for the repose of the soul of Roger the Norman, Count of Sicily, who ended the Arab occupation of Malta in 1090 and is there commemorated as "Deliverer of Malta and Founder of the *mensa* [table] of the Cathedral, the Bishop and the Canons." Should he chance to be in Malta before the beginning of Lent he will have the opportunity to witness in the carnival festivities not only the jollifications common to other Mediterranean carnivals but also features of more local interest, such as the Parata dance on the Palace Square, which takes its symbolism from the capture of a Maltese bride by a Moslem corsair.

If he prolongs his stay into the summer he will see on the 29th June, the feast of S. Peter and S. Paul, one of the most characteristic of Maltese popular functions in the densely thronged Mnarja races. These races, for horses and donkeys, are of unknown but undoubtedly great age. The course is a piece of straight, hard road leading uphill towards the big square in front of Mdina, a square known as the Saqqaja. Here, from his great stone box, the Grand Master in former days, in these days the Governor of Malta, hands the banners of victory down to the winning competitors, while interested spectators watch the proceedings from two smaller but similar boxes, flanking the Grand Master's and belonging to some of the leading families of the island.

The name Mnarja is a corruption of the Latin *luminaria* (illumination), for it was the custom on that day to illuminate the churches of Mdina and the adjacent Rabat in honour of the two saints. A more picturesque if unfortunately less trustworthy tradition derives Mnarja from Hymen, the goddess of marriage, it being supposed that the young men of the island were formerly in the habit of choosing their wives from among the maidens crowding to watch the contest. This much, at all events, may be urged in support of the latter theory, that until modern times Maltese brides

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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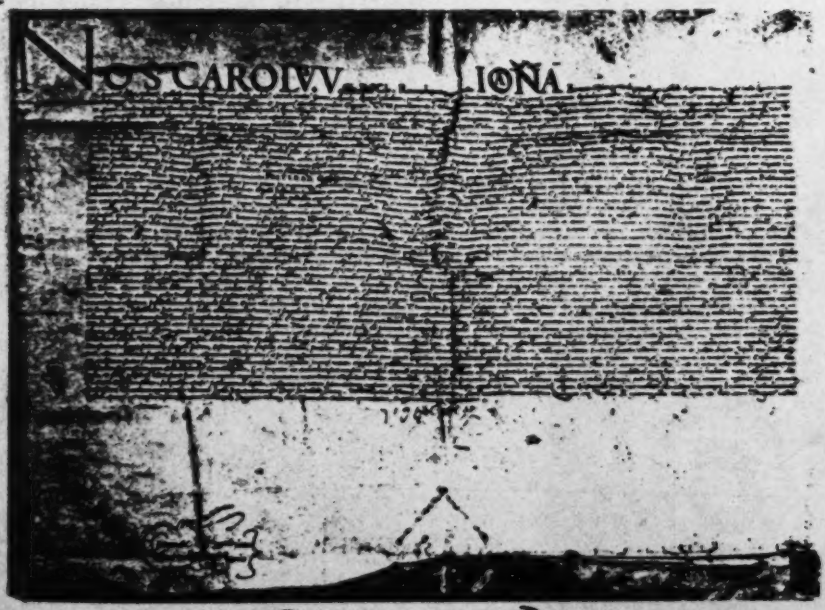
THE PALACE, VALETTA

[See p. 58]

GRANT OF MALTA TO THE KNIGHTS OF S. JOHN BY THE EMPEROR CHARLES V

[See p. 46.]

●175



[facing P. 64]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE GRAND MASTER'S HABIT

G.M. Vasconcellos

G.M. de Vilhena
(with Stoc and Pilier)

[facing p.104; (B)]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960.
EZ6 Malta EZ6

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●175

G.M. Hompesch

Emperor Paul of Russia as Grand Master

[facing P. 104, (C)]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

states. Alone with Gibraltar it runs a Lotto (with weekly drawings) as a Government Department. Until 1866 Malta's Opera House was the Manoel Theatre, a little gem of a playhouse built as the Court Theatre by Grand Master Manoel de Vilhena in 1731 and believed to be the oldest theatre in Europe. It is easy enough to appreciate how daintily graceful it must have looked when the audience, arrayed in the brocades and perukes of the eighteenth century, was assembled to witness some comedy of Molière or Goldoni. Later used as a cinema, it is now being scientifically restored to its original form and purpose.

In 1866 the new Opera House, officially called the Theatre Royal, was completed at a cost of £60,000 just within Kingsgate, partly on the site of a dilapidated old bakery which has been identified with the house of the Turcopilier, title of the Pillar or Head of the Langue of England. In 1873 this building, which was designed by Barry, the architect of the Covent Garden Theatre, in a style which while dignified was entirely out of harmony with Valetta's prevailing architectural character, was seriously damaged by fire and was reconstructed at a farther cost of £20,000. Before its destruction in the Second World War it was the only theatre known to the writer where it was the rule for male members of the audience to attend the evening performances either in mess dress or in evening dress with decorations.

The Monte di Pietà, the Government pawnbroking Department, was established at the end of the sixteenth century and was housed in its present handsome office in Merchants' Street by Ximenes, the last but two of Malta's Grand Masters. Connected with the Monte di Pietà is an institution known as the Monte di Redenzione. In wandering about the island the visitor will occasionally encounter a building of the seventeenth or eighteenth century adorned with a shield representing three cones surmounted by the letter "R". These buildings constitute the property, now administered by the Government of Malta under a trust, of

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

the Monte di Redenzione, a foundation established more than three hundred years ago by one Father Rafael, a Maltese Capuchin.

Preaching one day in the year 1607 in S. John's Conventual Church, this good friar called upon his hearers to inaugurate a fund for the redemption of the Christian captives of the Barbary States, whose sufferings he depicted in terms of such realism that the Grand Master, Alof de Wignacourt, was able to set up the Monte di Redenzione with the offerings of the congregation and of members of the Order. Later, other charitable persons added or made bequests to the fund, which at first paid a ransom of 70 scudi for each Maltese slave and 150 scudi for a Knight of the Order. Subsequently these rates were raised to 200 and 500 scudi respectively; but, as the wars between the Order and the Barbary States ceased and the latter discontinued their raids on the island, the original object of the trust came to be fulfilled. So its properties were combined with those of the Monte di Pietà and administered by the Order, and thus continue to be administered to the present day by the Malta Government.

The most important property of the Monte di Redenzione is Selmun Castle, which stands on a high eminence overlooking S. Paul's Island and S. Paul's Bay. It is a clumsy replica of Verdala but is none the less impressive with its four towers and general air of a mediæval fortified stronghold. A balcony that completely encircles the castle, towers and all, is a pleasing feature of a building which might otherwise seem heavy and lacking in the gracefulness which Verdala, vast as it is, possesses in so marked a degree. Another attractive little property of the Redenzione is a handsome armorial ornamented gateway of the reign of Grand Master Pinto, standing below Selmun near the junction of the main road between S. Paul's Bay and Mellieha and the track to Kalamistra.

In his wanderings, especially in the country districts, the

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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Corniche from heights as inaccessible as nature and man's ingenuity could make them. When the marauders from North Africa ceased to be a menace, the citadel was partly evacuated for the lower town, but happily was never abandoned completely. Even now it contains the cathedral of the diocese and the Law Court and Public Registry, formerly the residence of the Governors of Gozo; and, although many of its ancient houses are in ruins, a few are still inhabited.

One interesting little lane with façades of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was restored by the Government before the outbreak of the Second World War, as has been the handsome Renaissance building facing the entrance to the citadel latterly known as the Bondi Palace, as related at the end of Chapter XIII. One of the houses in the lane at one time belonged, as an inscription testifies, to the soldier Bernard, "*miles Bernardus*," who was killed at the capture of the citadel by the Turks under Sinan Pasha in 1551. When he saw that the fortress could hold out no longer this dauntless man took the lives of his wife and two daughters with his own hand to save them from being sold into captivity, and then fell, fighting to the end. The walls and fortifications of the citadel are happily well preserved.

Gozo was Ogygia or Gaulos to the Greeks, *gaulos* (γαῦλος) being the word the Greeks had for the round merchant-boats of their rivals, the Phœnicians. From Gaulos it became Gaulum to the Romans, then appears on Idrisi's map of 1154 as Ghudash, and in modern Maltese is known as Ghawdex (pronounced Audesh), its Bishop signing as *Episcopus Gaudisiensis*. The shortest ferry-crossing between the two islands is only four miles, yet many Gozitans have never been to Malta while the overwhelming majority of Maltese have never been to Gozo.

The Gozitans are a frugal, thrifty, reserved, at times somewhat (yet not unpleasantly) dour people, who are regarded in Malta in much the same way as the Scots are

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6
GOZO

172 Comino between them separated from the islet of Cominotto
173 by a channel of the palest green.

Traversing thousands of years, let us next notice a reminder
172 of the rule of Rome in the Latin inscription embedded in the entrance to the citadel, dating from the time when Gozo was a separate *municipium* of the Roman republic. Now for a glimpse of Islam, a legacy of the two centuries—from 870 to 1090—when the Arabs were the lords of these islands. Between the villages of Xewkija and Sannat on the road now called Ta Maimuna was discovered about three hundred years ago a slab of marble bearing an Arabic inscription in Kufic characters. This slab was the tombstone of an Arab girl named Maimuna, and the inscription is not only a fine piece of lapidary work but a human document from which I quote without apology:

> "Ask thyself," cries Maimuna from the grave, "if there is anything everlasting, anything that can repel or cast a spell upon death.
>
> "Alas, death has robbed me of my short life; neither my piety nor my modesty could save me from him. I was industrious in my work, and all that I did is reckoned and remains.
>
> "Oh, thou who lookest upon this grave in which I am enclosed, dust has covered my eyelids and the corners of my eyes.
>
> "On my couch and in my abode there is nought but tears; and [what will happen] when my Creator comes to me?
>
> "Oh, brother, take. . . ."

And here little Maimuna's pathetic message comes to an abrupt end.

873 The passage of a few more centuries brings us to the
• 175 spacious days of the Knights of S. John, the study of whose rule in Gozo may be facilitated by reference to the archives of the island's "University," for Gozo had, like Malta, its own "University" until the beginning of British rule.[1] It

[217] [1] These archives were rescued from oblivion after the Second World War by the Commissioner of Gozo, Mr E. Montanaro, and are now preserved in the Commissioner's Office.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6
Gozo

Among the more accessible survivals of the Order is the large and impressive Fort Chambray, which commands the island's principal port of Mġarr. This stronghold was built, as we have already seen, by Jacques de Chambray, one of the last of the great Admirals of the Order, when he was Governor[1] of Gozo in the middle of the eighteenth century so that the island should no longer be at the mercy of every raiding enemy. Not that Fort Chambray had ever to endure a siege at the hands of the Barbary pirates. Its value in that direction was mainly a prophylactic one. But it did serve a military purpose during the death-pangs of the Order in 1798, when the Gozitans under their Governor and three of the Knights shut themselves up within its walls, determined to hold out as long as they could against the surprised French, who had not expected any resistance.

Then there is the Banca Giuratale, a graceful, semicircular Baroque structure which Grand Master Manoel de Vilhena erected at the end of the main square of Victoria as the offices of the Jurats of Gozo. Another was until 1943—alas, that the past tense has to be used here—the charming manor outside Xewkija known as the Torri Gourgion. Although it had fallen somewhat from its high estate and had been reduced to the status of a farmhouse, this unspoiled piece of seventeenth-century rural architecture, embellished by a charming well, yet retained externally all the dignity of that lordly epoch. Its stone drop-boxes alternating with elaborate stone escutcheons, its tall staircase tower topped by a conspicuous dome, its suggestion of the fortified country-house —all these features made it the only structure of its kind in the Maltese Islands.

It is indeed lamentable that it should have had to be razed to the ground in 1943, not by enemy action but to make room for a temporary American aerodrome required in

[1] The Governor of Gozo, known in Maltese as the Hakem, lived in the house in the Citadel which, as has been said, is now the Law Court and Public Registry.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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ARMS AND INSCRIPTION ABOVE THE MAIN GUARD, VALETTA
[See p. 119.]

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

•175
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To the Governor
Malta.

To know her brave people
I award the George Cross to the
Island Fortress of Malta to bear
witness to a heroism and devotion
that will long be famous in history.

George R.I.

April 15th 1942.

KING GEORGE VI'S LETTER AWARDING THE GEORGE CROSS
[See p. 231]

[Facing Pa 241]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

668 of July 1955, to avoid unemployment, the representatives of the Maltese people, in Parliament assembled, declare themselves absolved from their pacts and obligations towards the British Government, and from those so far assumed towards the Allies of that Government—this position to obtain for so long as the British Government fails to guarantee that the number of persons employed by the said Government in Malta shall not decrease before there is "alternative employment" for those discharged.

On this inauspicious note ended the year 1957 despite the patient efforts of the Government in London and of Sir Robert Laycock and his advisers in Malta to bring the protracted and often vexatious negotiations to a happy issue. The latter's task thereafter was made no easier by a Circular issued in February 1958 to Heads of Departments and all other Malta Government employees forbidding them on pain of disciplinary action "to make any verbal or personal contacts on any official matter with any member of the other side of the Diarchy" without the personal permission of the Minister concerned. In April these words were extended to cover "any official matter *or otherwise*." Thereby was created the anomalous situation that the islands' officials subordinate to the Mintoff Administration had to boycott those of the Maltese Imperial Government not only officially but socially, even to the extent of declining the Governor's invitations to dinner. Be it added that the embargo was far from being universally observed, while Ministers continued to seek direct personal contacts with the Imperial side of the Diarchy whenever it suited them to do so.

3

643 In 1608 one of the greatest and most innovating painters
175 of the Seicento, that Michaelangelo Amerighi who was
532 better known from his birthplace as Caravaggio, spent some
659 months of his short and disordered life in Malta, employed

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

by the splendid, vigorous and art-loving Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt. Notwithstanding the Grand Master's generous protection the 38-year-old artist soon made Malta too hot to hold him. He was put in prison, escaped and died in Italy within a year or so. But in the meantime Malta and the world had become the richer by two pictures which he painted for S. John's Conventual Church in Valetta, the great Beheading of S. John the Baptist and the smaller S. Jerome. In 1956 these pictures, which had never before left the walls for which they were painted except to be put in a place of safety during the Second World War, were sent to Italy in a British man-of-war for restoration and for display at the Exhibition of seventeenth-century art held in Rome during the winter of 1956–57. Of this Exhibition, indeed, the larger picture provided the central attraction.

At the close of the Exhibition the pictures were brought back to Malta, again in one of Her Majesty's ships, but to the general astonishment were forcibly impounded on arrival by the Maltese Government on Mr Mintoff's orders without previous notice and conveyed to the Museum despite vigorous protests from the ecclesiastical authorities. The Mintoff Government had clashed with the Church on other matters but there had been no inkling that its unpredictable leader had ever contemplated the transfer of these pictures to civil custody or the use of unilateral high-handed action to bring it about.

The state of tension with the Church created by this and other subjects of disagreement persisted for another year, that is to say until April 1958, by which time Mr Mintoff, now ready to break with the British Government, decided to clear the decks by making his peace with the Archbishop. As abruptly as he had seized the Caravaggios did he return them to S. John's, at the oddly chosen time of 1 A.M. on Sunday, the 20th April. On the following day statements were issued from the Archbishop's Palace and the Prime Minister's office declaring that good relations between the Government and the Church had been restored.